

A CURIOUS HISTORY IN BOOK EDITING

INCLOSING LETTERS OF THE
SENIOR EDITOR
CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

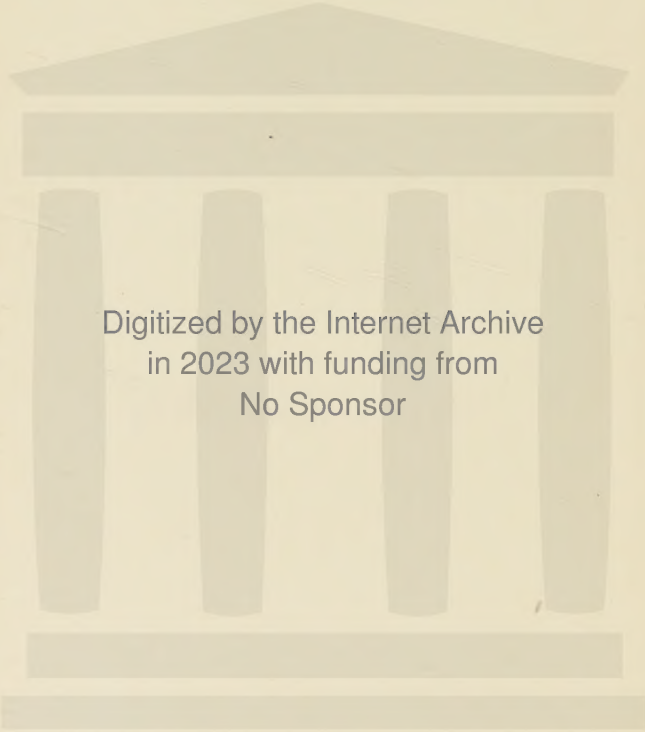
KATE STEPHENS

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A CURIOUS HISTORY IN BOOK EDITING

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INCLOSING LETTERS OF THE
SENIOR EDITOR
CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

BY
KATE STEPHENS
THE JUNIOR EDITOR

He that is faithful in that which is
least is faithful also in much; and he
that is unjust in the least, is unjust
also in much.

The Gospel according to Luke

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PROEM

Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense; for the inmost in due time becomes the outmost.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

At the New York Public Library, in the summer of 1925, I chanced upon a catalogue card bearing this legend:—

The Heart of Oak Books. Book 4 Edited by Charles Eliot Norton and Kate Stephens . . . Boston: 1893
12.

Cataloguing laws of the Library, that is, gave to the first edition of a minor work a separate card. And the card bore my name. A fellow card, of another and later edition of the Books, carried one name alone, Mr. Norton's.

Why should my name be on the title page of the first edition only? A reasonable question. Some one may ask it in the future. Many have put it to me in the past. And in the future I shall not be here to answer.

Perplexities went with me down the Library's

marble stairs and back to my study. Those meticulous rules of the New York Public Library! Are all things covered up to be revealed? Things which are not, I pondered, shall they bring to nought things that are?

Events of long-passed years began vivifying themselves in my memory. A few weeks before I had happened upon a box of letters stowed away in my study, in the labor of living and the obliteration of the past by an insistent present, almost forgotten. It was this box that prompted me to turn to the catalogue of the Library, and to the name under which I found the card of the first edition—Charles Eliot Norton.

Again back in my study, I took up the box. More than twenty years before I arranged in chronological order letters from the senior editor, a few notes of my own, and then sealed the box with instructions on the cover that it be destroyed in event of my death. Why I kept the letters I do not know—perhaps from an indefinite feeling that some day a clearing-up might come, the subconscious faith in us humans that there is ultimate justice.

An atom, with its revolving electrons, is, within itself, said to be subject to identical laws that guide our solar system and the stars through the heavens.

In the vast histories men have written from the millennium of the Cro-Magnons, this history is an atom. But, after pondering the motions it reveals, I see it is a minikin of the larger world, in the dynamics of human life a universe, worthy, like the atom, of record.

Record, therefore. "This one thing I do"—remembering "those things which are behind, and reaching unto those things which are before."

A CURIOUS HISTORY
IN BOOK EDITING

I

Take hold of the thistle, no matter how hard it pricks.
Old Saw

WE were living in Cambridge, Massachusetts, when the income on which I depended for rent, wages of Mother's Nova Scotia nurse, of our ebony house-maid and other household purposes fell, with most of its principal, into a pit—which, long concealed by anxiety-allaying promises, at last proved bottomless. Nothing remained but to break up our home and find protection for those for whom I kept the house—Mother, my little niece, and that girl of gold (the third generation of her family to be with ours) our never-work-shy African maid.

Sometime during these cataclysmic months, a friendly minded neighbor, a Harvard professor, becoming aware of my plight, suggested that I offer my services to the rapidly expanding publishing house of Messrs. D. C. Heath & Company whom he knew and knew to be looking out for editors. Mr. Heath and Mrs. Heath I had met

and had business correspondence with in years I had the chair of Greek in the University of Kansas. They had seemed to me a splendid example of American energy and of the constructiveness which is sometimes allied with well reasoned optimism.

At this time of which I speak the publisher was, singularly enough, ruminating a wish for a series of Readers—popular books for children, that is—whose matter a refined taste should choose from our race's store of literature. The idea upon which he built his wish had had expression at some meeting, when Mr. James Russell Lowell declared that the children of our country were not getting their due share of our people's great art and great tradition; and that through dearth of proper publication.

Possibilities of the development of this idea into material form seized the publisher's out-branching, up-building instincts, and led him to ask a young college professor, Mr.——, to work out a book for a series he projected. He also spoke to several men—one was Dr. Granville Stanley Hall, the psychologist—about acting as senior editor in the venture. Finally, to induce Mr. Charles Eliot Norton to accept the charge, Mr. Heath had at the time gone to Mr. Norton's home in Cambridge, Shady Hill.

The try-out, Mr.—'s product, the publisher could not foresee the commercial success of. And Mr. Norton, according to Mr. Heath's account, at last came to his opinion. Thus matters stood.

The day I ventured offering my services to his house—adding that my work would have to be confined to English since doctors forbade my use of any other language—I knew nothing of the publisher's personal wishes, and had never heard of his projected Readers. After his detailed account, from which I have just quoted, and his showing me the manuscript of Mr.—'s book, he asked if I would like the junior editorship of the series—his house's pay for my work, he continued, to be by monthly salary for one year to the amount of one thousand dollars for the compilation of five books. Naturally I would like the junior editorship. Coming to my exiguous resources its returns would balm aching wounds.

The post would, however, carry several preliminary duties. One was the task of securing a senior editor, a man of standing in the world of letters, whose achievements had brought him introduction to the general public—whose work, that is, had given him rational, legitimate advertisement. Three men, as possibilities, Mr. Heath named in this initial interview.

Heartened by the publisher's offer of agreeable

labor and compensation for the labor, if I succeeded in engaging a senior editor to his liking, I sought an appointment with Mr. Norton. Merest courtesy demanded that I first seek Mr. Norton. He had so far committed himself to the work as to accede to Mr. Heath's wish for his senior editorship. He had worked with Mr.—, and had given an opinion of Mr.—'s tentative volume.

It is necessary, at this point, to turn back and call to mind conditions pertaining further back than one generation ago, prefacing our digression with the statement of the general law that began its workings even before the days our ancestors first used bows and arrows—the law, namely, that men possess, still possess, an undying taste for the chase, love of excitement in bagging quarry, and pride in the exhibition of pelts and antlers and “brushes” they bring in.

Conditions two or three generations ago let us illustrate by a glance at facts we see and hear of to-day. In these times, as every boy knows, it is not unusual for Americans to spend great patience and large sums in traversing mountain flanks, swales, torrential rivers and veldts of Cameroon, the Congos, Somaliland, the Sudan and other remote parts of the earth's surface in devoted effort to get in touch with curious, little-

understood creatures—elephants, for instance, long-tailed monkeys, voiceful parakeets, the ruminating okapi, antelopes such as the pookoo, the lechwe, the impala. Adventuring in such a life men and women report the man-eating lion of forest and desert; hippopotami rising to the surface of mighty rivers; pursuit of rhinos and scarlet serpents; and even a parasite fish fastening itself by suction plates to a more highly developed swimmer and obtaining free transportation, protection and food. The amorous curiosity of such travelers gives also to the world the private doings of pretty savages and elaborates the travelers' own fraternization with head-hunters. All this with never a thought of literature. Also with never a thought of more than photographic art.

Identical zest for going after game undeniably stirred generations foregoing our present time. In those days it was not uncommon for Americans of independent means to hunt strange, little-understood creatures. This truth is sun-clear. Curiosity the Times-Spirit then bent to a human-viewing, social turn. And in accord with the tastes of those people of fifty, sixty and more years ago, sport lay not in the silence and majesty of nature, over the broad face of a continent. The game Americans then sought was mainly patri-cians, gentry, dandies and others whose names

had reached their ears—the best-paying bag being men of letters, “literary people of London,” at work in their shops and cottages, or at play in drawing rooms of town and country houses of Europe, oftenest England and Italy. Then, as now, the reporter-huntsmen told how they obtained ingress to penetralia, and of abiding places, external aspects, temperament and general courses of action of those creatures—authors and artists—they had brought to bay.

Men’s tastes to-day not so different from men’s tastes in those earlier years, you see. Earlier-time men merely set out after a lion in form and roarings unlike those our sciential grandsons of Ham to-day stalk. Lions we say advisedly, those forerunners sought. They were out after, in the descriptive of our newspapers, “big game.” No record tells that the sportsmen retired into laboratories and set up microscopes to view and report the life which Swinburne called the infusoria and animalcula of literature.

What some of the early hunters brought back, all of us know. Washington Irving’s concreting kit familiarized and delighted our childhood with the Christmas, the boar’s head, roast beef, fox hunting and stage coaches of England’s squirearchy; and with tales of Spain that set all readers

dreaming. Before Irving, Nathaniel Parker Willis, whose "Pencillings" perished from fopperies. Fenimore Cooper had already scandalized Englishmen galore and some Americans. Antedating them all went Benjamin Franklin on missions. Forerunners these. Later light-armed thousands engaged in the sport—especially in decades of the last third of the nineteenth century, after the American people had settled back from war. With two of the most advertised it chanced I had acquaintance. One, a fellow-student, "an Englishman" he called himself in those university days, "an Irishman" he described himself to Carlyle later, and in the storm and stress of the great war "an American," at all times seemingly allegiant to no government, but born in Ireland and, if report be true, by blood a Jew—Frank Harris. The other the antithesis of Frank Harris in manners and mind, an Anglo-Saxon, Puritan blooded New Englander of the "Boston brahmin" type—Charles Eliot Norton. Each of these men ventured to practise the venatic craft in Europe, and each according to his idiosyncratic temper wrote of men and women abroad with whom he formed acquaintance or enduring friendship. Each for a time at least became Leo Hunter Froggles;

"He knows celebrities . . . or else he lies . . .
They share with him their tears, their chaff;
HE KNEW CELEBRITIES: his epitaph
Let that line be, when busy Froggles dies."

Mr. Norton was now, in this year of action for Mr. Heath's Readers, settled in his native Cambridge. He had published a volume about travels and study in Italy; also "Church Building in the Middle Ages," and a translation of Dante's "Vita Nuova." He had identified himself with magazines, worked in various societies for preserving records, and, a born editor, had come to reflect the clouded radiance of a Clough, Emerson's moonlight glow, and the primitive intensity and vivid spectrum color of Thomas Carlyle. In years within our view he had stood considerably before the public in his disagreement with Froude's use of Carlyle biographical material, and through his own editing of several volumes of Carlyle's letters and reminiscences; and also because in "Praeterita" Ruskin had written of him with superlative praise.

The day I went to see him about the proposed Readers, I knew his gentle fame. And I believed he had met a modicum of my work. The editor of *The Forum*, Walter Hines Page, had in the issue of March, 1889, put my article, "Advanced

Education for Women." between Mr. Norton's "A Definition of the Fine Arts" and "The Bible in the Public Schools" by Henry Edward Cardinal Manning. And *Scribner's Magazine* of May, 1889, had carried my verse, "A Fragment from Plato" with a few pages further on Mr. Norton's "The Lack of Old Homes in America." These facts, however, had no mention the morning I saw Mr. Norton about the proposed Books, or at any other time. He appeared the soul of amiability, but, saying he had work pressing to be done, refused the offer I brought. Publication of his translation of "The Divine Comedy of Dante" was at the time pending.

My next action, to which the publisher agreed, was to dispatch a note to my neighbor down the street, Mr. Horace E. Scudder, who earlier in his career had written successful books for children. He had lately come into the editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Mr. Scudder answered by coming in informally to see me. He then said that his associations with the Houghton, Mifflin firm were so close that he could not identify himself with the output of any other house.

Possibilities of other men to act as senior editor I canvassed in mind; but I made no further definite offer.

It seemed to me that Mr. Norton was the best

possible man to help me work out the idea of the Readers—as I had conceived it and as I believed the publisher had dreamed. Therefore I made effort again to see him, and in our prolonged talk entered into the business more explicitly:—That he be senior editor; I junior editor; that our names stand in that relation on the title pages; I to get ready the copy for the printer, following frequent consultations with him; we to be in accord as to every inclusion in the Books.

After a day or two of reflection, Mr. Norton accepted the senior editorship.

Even to this remote time I recollect how waves of relief swept over me when the business seemed assured. The work would mean for the year it was agreed it should engage me, freedom from worry about means of simple living; it would renew associations with old and friendly books; and it would give me the gratifying assurance that fruits of the labor would bring gain to others—by increasing their knowledge of and taste for genuine literature.

Mr. Norton's receptive and genial manner, his forthrightness, his incommunicably sympathetic voice, were charming. About him was the serenity of one whose nerves had never tautened till they quivered under the strain of the primary questions of life. Also the ripeness of the leisurely scholar

—of him whom anxieties of every day living had not forced to sell his brains. He appeared totally unaffected and sincere. His own words in these letters and notes which follow witness to his native kindliness of soul.

Our discussions began at once.

CAMBRIDGE, 9 March, 1891

Dear Miss Stephens,

I send you Mr. Heath's letter to me, and my reply. If my reply does not seem to you, who understand all the conditions of the case, what it ought to be, please let me know, and return it to me. If it seems right to you, please put it in the post, and let it go to Mr. Heath.

I wrote the last sentence of my reply, in order that Mr. Heath might not relieve himself from the payment to you of a regular salary on the ground that you were to have a share in the royalty; or, on the other hand might not assume that your salary was a payment in advance on a/c of royalty.

Should Mr. Heath make a contract with me on my terms I shall see that you have a legal claim on a portion of the royalty. It will probably never amount to much, but it ought to bring you in a few hundred dollars.

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

SHADY HILL, 16 March, 1891

Dear Miss Stephens,

I enclose Mr. Heath's letter which came to me this afternoon, and my reply to it. Will you, if you please, kindly forward my letter to Mr. Heath?

Very truly Yours

C. E. NORTON

20 March

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am sorry for Mr. Heath's conclusion.

I should be glad to see you, in order to advise with you as to the Readers.

I shall be at home on Sunday and on Monday morning,—if you will do me the favor to come to see me on whichever day best suits you.

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

Monday

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am on my way to the Library, & will return the book. I am sorry to have given you this trouble concerning it;—and to have missed your last visit. I hope not to miss the next.

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

SHADY HILL, 24 April, 1891

Dear Miss Stephens,

I thank you for your note and for the books which you left for me to look over.

I sent your letter to Mr. Heath. It seemed to me very good.

It was a disappointment to me to find nothing in the Irish Minstrelsy to serve our purpose except the ever-charming "Bells of Shandon" and "Groves of Blarney." Of the rest the greater part is too Irish and too histrionic. The want of genuine simplicity of feeling is apparent in the effusive emotion. Of the pieces that have the tower-stamp of sincerity hardly one is of any high poetic merit.

I was sorry too to find nothing that seemed to me of a high order in Boyle O'Reilly's volumes. They have fluency, good invention, poetic diction, & all that goes to the making of a second-rate popular poet, but of genius, of true imagination, of vitality I could find hardly a line. Perhaps you may, (I wish you may) have better fortune.

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

II

Rien n'est beau que le vrai.

Proverbe

DURING the year of our compilation of material, and the later long, lean months of waiting for the publishers first to get criticisms from teachers, and then to set and make up the Books, I was subject to doctors' orders—to lie down an hour, say, in the middle of the day. The physical prostration that comes to those subjected to sudden misfortune had a heavy hand on me. Tasks of afternoon were lighter if I could get off by myself after mid-day, shut my eyes, loosen whatever grasp I had on the world and forget the past's desolating strokes.

Yet, in these rests, I often found that to lie down set thought spinning—induced “brain race,” as doctors say. Others have told of accelerated mental action under like conditions, since then I have learned—for instance, Plato, Swift, Shelley, Mark Twain. However, in those hours of calmness and apartness from the push of life, I sometimes turned in mind needs and actions of

the day's affairs, and, as action and need clarified in my vision, I would reach out for paper and make notes of what I purposed to say and do.

From such notes are copied letters of mine coming in this history, and also fragments of my letters. By merest chance I saved a few of these bedside notes. Possibly I thought they might serve to jog my memory in some detail. All this happened before the broad distribution of the typewriter and carbon-impress. I kept no regular copies of letters and notes I had occasionally to send the senior editor.

This is the first letter I preserved:

120 Brattle Street

18 June 1891

Dear Mr. Norton,

I will come next Monday morning to look over the matter for the Readers, if I do not hear from you that that hour is inconvenient. If it is, will you not name another day, and any other time in the day that is better for you?

Miss—— considered the details Miss Norton sent, and found your little house at Ashfield too small, or rather coming a little too late to accord with the plans of her family. I am sorry, for you would have found any of the family who chose to occupy it most agreeable tenants. Others to

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whom I have spoken have also completed their plans for the summer. I shall meet still others. I should like to take it and live the *schönen tage ganz mütter seele allein*; but I must stay here and work.

And staying here—I hardly know what to say about living at Shady Hill. I should like to. There is much that would give me pleasure. But I have no friend whom I can expect to be with me continuously, and you might not think it best for me to be there with some chance maid only. This is not quite what you suggested. The house and its belongings might not seem so secure with one alone. If this should be so, and it should increase your care, do not consider it a moment. Let us speak of it more at length when I see you. After more than a year of boarding-house life—if it is life—and the nervous friction, and irritation, and loss of self-definiteness it entails, it would be a pleasure to find myself in wholesome solitude.

There is another matter I should like to speak with you about. When I endeavored to the other day it clung to my throat, as Virgil says, and I could not. You spoke three or four weeks ago of “a purely American” volume to supplement those Readers now in preparation, and added with a little emphasis, “But I shall take a patent on that myself.” At the time it did not occur to me what

you really meant, perhaps because of the spirit of the sentence. It is a humiliation to me that you should think I could use one of your ideas, and you must forefend yourself by such a remark. I have regard for what you think, but will you not believe it is from appreciation of the thought itself, and not from any advantage that might accrue to me from its use at market stalls? Just as your judgments in general seem wise, so your occasional misjudgments of me are painful.

I hope I have not been too hasty or warm in my own defense. I did not like to make it; but I could not leave your misconceptions to time to clear. Pray let us not refer to it again, and believe me

Sincerely yours

KATE STEPHENS

SHADY HILL, 19 June, 1891

Dear Miss Stephens,

There is, I believe, to be a meeting of the College Faculty at ten o'clock on Monday, so that if you can come to see me on Sunday (I shall be at home all the morning) we shall be more sure of having time to attend to matters that need considering.

I am glad you told me of your disapproval of my expression about the proposed volume of

American selections, for you quite misinterpreted its intention, and I should be sorry that you should rest under a misconception of it. It was wholly humorous. You were not in my thoughts. You may be assured that it is impossible for me to fancy that you could make use of any suggestion of mine that I should not entirely approve. So far as I can recall I had only Mr. Heath in mind, and what I meant by taking out a patent on the idea was that I did not mean that he should lay any claim to it; but I had no definite intention in mind. It was a mere passing fancy suggested by former experience with Mr. Heath, & without conscious selfishness.

It would be a real satisfaction to me to have you occupy this house during the summer. And if you can secure a trustworthy servant, and if you are not averse to the solitude, I think you might find some pleasure in residence here. My man, who has been in my service for almost thirty years, lives half a mile away, but he will be on the place every day and almost all day. He would supply you with milk, and would be ready to do anything which you might require of him. Of this and other details we can talk when we meet.

I thank you for what you have done in regard to the occupancy of my little Ashfield farm house—Liliput by name, having belonged, before I be-

came its owner, to an old farmer of the name of Lilly.

Believe me,

Sincerely yours
C. E. NORTON

Thursday

Dear Miss Stephens,

I should be glad to see you once more before I leave Cambridge.

I have to go to Boston this morning, and I may not be at home before six o'clock.

Could you, then, come now for a few minutes before eleven, or, if it pleases you better, between six and seven this afternoon.

I would not trouble you were not the matter on which I want to speak with you of some interest.

Sincerely yours
C. E. NORTON

Mr. Norton's trusted Bernard brought this foregoing note early in the morning.

When the sun was sinking beyond the Charles River—it was a soft, calm, rose-and-amethyst tinted evening—I walked over to Shady Hill.

III

Ev'y body talkin' 'bout heaben ain' gwine der.

Negro Spiritual

THE "matter of some interest" was arrangement of letters. Mr. James Russell Lowell lay desperately ill at his home in Cambridge. Death might free him at any moment. Mr. Norton he had named his literary executor, and in Mr. Norton's hands had put many letters.

Documentation of the letters would be a first step toward biographical volumes.

Would I undertake the first sorting?

"Yes," I said.

Then Mr. Norton spoke of paying me for arranging the letters. In answer I told, perhaps with some particularity, but not with more than might clear every misconception, that I could not take something for nothing, for example house-rent, and that question had been troubling me: that I had grown up seeing the example and hearing the precept, "Look out for others; think of what you can do to help those you meet"—the admixture of altruistic simplicity and benefactive-

ness that has characterized for centuries the blood and tradition of the well-bred English (the very essence of democracy, by the way, and yet, also, a sort of *noblesse oblige*, since it means obligation to share with others whatever excellence one may have)—and had only lately found that the rule “What can those I meet do to help me?” is, in the general life of the world, a vastly commoner inculcation: that I knew there were parasites in human form because I had seen many prey on members of my family whose old English goodwill, *benevolentia*, made them parasites’ victims.

And now, since I recoiled from any form of parasitism whatever, I should be glad to do the documentation to pay rent for the roof which was to cover me for the summer, and for the pleasure of solitariness in the beauty and amplitude of Shady Hill—in short, I would pay my summer house-rent by doing the work he wished done.

When I said I would estimate my documentation as paying rent for his house, I could not help smiling. Mr. Norton, also, as he listened—his smile always illuminated his countenance, but always, too, radiated austerity, as if he measured, and a little hesitantly, whether geniality should win.

The business moulded itself in this conversation, and so ended.

But when, at last, leisure came for untying the bundles of the Lowell letters, I could not get at their storage place in the upper hall.

ASHFIELD, Independence Day

Dear Miss Stephens,

The door of the cupboard is not locked! It needs only to be pulled open.

I am glad that you are willing to undertake the arrangement of the letters, for I think you can hardly fail to find the work interesting, and it is work that may be done only as you have inclination to do it.

Your "character" of Mr. Heath is, I am sure, truly drawn. I am not so impatient of him as my words may have led you to suppose. He "tried" me a good deal with his course about the Readers; first putting his hand to the plough and then drawing back. I understood his timidities, but they wasted my time. And he has seemed to me too grasping in his dealings, especially with you. I do not grow impatient with business details, for I have had enough to do with business to know their importance.—I can think very kindly of Mr. Heath, and should not find it very hard even to like him.

I return, by mail, the little volume of Elizabethan Lyrics. There are pretty things in it,—but we know prettier of the same sort. They are the songs of a melodious time, but not the sweetest that were sung. Perhaps we should like some of them among those we like the best had we but known them longer. As it is, I find none to add to your short list; and short as it is I would make it shorter still.

I am glad that Shady Hill proves pleasant & restful to you. May it continue to be so.

Sally bids me thank you for your kind note to her.

Believe me

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

Sunday

Dear Miss Stephens,

It has occurred to me since writing to you yesterday that there is a chance that my daughter Margaret or Miss Sedgwick may have locked the cupboard after I left home. If so, Miss Sedgwick will doubtless know where the key is to be found.

But I still think it more likely that the doors only stick.

I hope it is warmer at Cambridge than here. If not, then I hope that you have as bright a fire

as the one which is blazing on the hearth in the old-fashioned room in which I am writing.

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

After studying out the most practical form for documentation of the Letters, and the form most expedient for Mr. Norton's use, I sent him drafts of three forms for his choice. This letter following tells the forms he chose.

ASHFIELD, 1 August, 1891

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am very much obliged to you for your note and for the interesting letter which you enclosed in regard to the Newbury books. I wish it might turn out that two or three of them were worth reprinting. Mr. Whitmore certainly knows a good deal about Mother Goose, but I question if his general knowledge of old fashioned books for children can approach that of Mr. Welsh.

As to the Index I wish you would kindly make it on quarto paper, not in a book, if it be equally convenient for you to do so. This would admit of interleaving, or other changes more easily than if a book be used.

What I specially want is an Index of the letters

written *by* Mr. Lowell, but I should like very much also a brief list, after the fashion of your form No. 2, of letters to him. Or a still briefer form would answer: e. g.

C. F. Briggs, 1840-47 28

G. B. Loring, 1836-49 13

I will get a proper case for the letters when I come again to Cambridge, in which they can be arranged as you suggest.

I am glad that your life runs on equably at Shady Hill. I should be glad to know that the quiet and seclusion had brought back regular sleep to you.

Sally is proposing to go to Cambridge next Wednesday to be with her Aunts for a time. She will see you then, meanwhile she bids me give you her very kind regards.

Believe me,

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

Will you be so good as to give my thanks (whenever it may be convenient to you) to Mr. Heath for the list of books recommended for children in the School Journal. It is a jumble of good & bad.

ASHFIELD, 28 August, 1891

Dear Miss Stephens,

I beg you to pardon me for not sooner replying to your very kind letter of the 23d. Even here, the days are sometimes so filled with occupations which cannot be avoided, or broken by interruptions which cannot be guarded against, that the hours pass very differently from one's hopes and intentions in regard to them.

I am very glad that the Index is finished, and I thank you for making it, and for what you offer so kindly to do with regard to the new letters that may come into my hands. I shall accept your offer with pleasure and satisfaction, on the single condition that you will allow me to pay you, not for your services—they do not admit of payment—but for your time. I do not fail to sympathize with your feeling in the matter, and I am grateful to you for your wish and readiness to help me. But I think you will feel on further consideration that what I propose is really the right arrangement from an abstract point of view, and at the same time the arrangement that would put me most at ease in asking you to do what may need to be done.

If you agree with me in this, as I believe you will, I will ask Miss Sedgwick to get and put in

your hands Lowell's letters to me, of which there are a great number, to be added to the Index. They are now arranged in order of date; but it will facilitate matters to have them listed in their right places with the letters to other persons.

I am glad that Shady Hill proves kindly to you. My daughters join me in all good wishes and kind regards to you, and I am

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

ASHFIELD, 21 Sept. 1891

Dear Miss Stephens,

In looking over the papers on my table I find the enclosed letter which I carelessly omitted to return to you. Pray excuse me, and, if you please, make my excuses to Mr. Heath.

These last days have been among the most beautiful of the year, here among the hills; I hope that at Cambridge also they have been beautiful and that you have been well enough to enjoy them.

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

SHADY HILL, 9 Oct. 1891

Dear Miss Stephens,

If there is room for selections from all the books on this list, it would be well to have them

all. But only those I have marked with a * seem to me indispensable.

There is no great literary merit in Cook's "Voyages"; More's "Utopia" is desirable but archaic; Southey's two poems are hardly likely to hold a permanent place in English literature;—and so on.

I return Dana, I am

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

SHADY HILL, 8 Nov. 1891

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am much pleased to find you in the mental attitude of a disciple of the Jesuits! (Please understand that this is said lightly, with a smile.) It *is* all right in the matter of the assignment, so far as it goes, and I beg you to be at peace, and at perfect ease in regard to it.

Please, also, accept my thanks once more for your work on the proofsheets of the Purgatory. I thank you for your expression of the interest you find in reading the pages,—and of your kind wish to do something further to help me in my work. I am sure that I shall have occasion, before long, to ask you for aid, and I shall do so not only with confidence in your readiness to help, but also

in the entire efficiency and helpfulness of what you may do.

Sincerely yours
C. E. NORTON

SHADY HILL, 11 Dec. 1891

My Dear Miss Stephens,

Will you be so good as to decide the question concerning "Dame Wiggin of Lee?" I question whether if we have one piece illustrated we ought not to have more than one.

Is it not nearly time for me to have the pleasure of another visit from you? I thank you for returning to me the two books of poetry.

Sincerely yours
C. E. NORTON

SHADY HILL, 23 Dec. 1891

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am much obliged to you for "The Child and his Book." It is a pity that the subject is not treated in it with a little more skill, and a more discriminating taste, as well as with a touch more of imagination.

To-morrow evening I expect to receive a goodly number of the students of the University and of the Annex, between eight and ten o'clock. It would give me much pleasure to welcome you

also, if you would be interested in seeing these young people,—and forecasting from their looks our near future.

I shrink still from undertaking a lecture for the College Club,—for my occupations do not leave me leisure to make fit preparation for it.

I shall be glad to see you at any time about the Readers.

Always sincerely Yours

C. E. NORTON

SHADY HILL, 30 Dec. 1891

My dear Miss Stephens,

I am very sorry that I did not see you on Monday,—you were but ten minutes too early for me.

I am still shut up by my cold but if you will kindly come to-morrow or the next day, about half past ten, I will gladly consider with you whatever may need attention.

Believe me

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

SHADY HILL, 7 Febr. 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

I have at last been able to get to work on the "Readers." I trust to your kindness to pardon my unavoidable delay. I have thrown out something

and added something to Nos. I. & II., and I have asked the Misses Child, who are skilled in such things, to look them over & suggest what may improve them.

I thank you for the papers you left the other day, and for the second volume of Fitzgerald. I hope you like what is in it as well as I do, for then you must have had a great pleasure in reading it.

I enclose a rough-draft of what I propose as an Introduction. Will you read it with an eye to find all its faults and omissions. I shall improve it in copying it, but I submit it to you now that I may have the benefit of your criticism before doing so. Will you read it from Mr. Heath's point of view, & consider what more he may like to have said;—or what less?

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

I expect to be at home every morning this week. Perhaps if one of them should prove pleasant, you will do me the favor to come to give me your criticism by word of mouth.

SHADY HILL, 20 Febr. 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

Here are parts III and IV. I am sorry that I have not been able to send them sooner to you.

The selections as a mass seem to me very good, but I fear that Mr. Heath will find the mass too great. I have therefore taken out from each Part such as I think may be best spared, and have put an india-rubber band round them. But even with this lessening, so much remains that it will not surprise me if Mr. Heath wishes the bulk to be still more diminished.

I am not entirely satisfied with the order of the pieces. If you will be so good as to make a list of the contents in an approximate order, we can then judge better, it seems to me, how to arrange them in a final order.

In these parts, I think that the names of the authors of the pieces should be printed at the beginning of each, as in the manuscript. And I believe I was wrong in thinking that they should be omitted from the earlier parts,—that is, the names of authors; I still think it would be better not to insert "From traditional sources" & such like phrases.

I shall try to send you the remaining parts in the course of a very few days.

Faithfully Yours

C. E. NORTON

IV

Our freedom for a little bread we sell,
And drudge under some foolish master's ken
Who rates us if we peer outside our pen.

Matthew Arnold

SHADY HILL, 27 Febr. 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am sorry not to see you once more before your departure, in order that I might wish you a pleasant journey and a cheerful return. I should have come to see you, had I not been kept close to the house for the last two or three days by a cold.

I will keep parcel V. of copy for the Readers, during your absence. You have done all your work so faithfully & thoroughly that I cannot believe that any questions will arise in regard to it.

I am a little afraid that the impression made on Mr. Heath by the copy in its present condition will not be so favorable, as if it had been held back till we could fix the final order and succession of the pieces. It is a little chaotic now, or may be so in its aspect to one so set on "grading" as Mr. Heath.

I suppose that it is time for my Introduction to go to him, and, in sending it I shall write a few words in regard to the copy.

I hope that you are not to be gone for many weeks. I wish that the days of your absence may be pleasant to you, and make a good vacation for you,—and

I am

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

SHADY HILL, 29 March, 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am glad to hear of your safe return, and I hope you came back in better health than when you went away. One needs all the health one can get to stand against such weather as this March has given us. Some pleasant morning I shall be much pleased to see you. There is no need of haste. The work that remains to be done on the Readers is not difficult.

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

Miss Kate Stephens.

The windfall Mr. Norton refers to in his next letter was this:—My family owned a tract of land in a southern state. Of the part assigned to

me a few acres had, in survey and sale of the tract, fallen out of the accounting. A small farmer finally buying the acres and tracing his title, had discovered the omission and asked for a deed. His payment of dues to me was the "goodluck."

SHADY HILL, 8 April, 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am truly pleased to hear of the goodluck that has befallen you. Goodluck so seldom falls to the right persons, that when it does so it has the charm of wit as well as of poetry.

But this little streak of sunshine in your life has no bearing whatsoever on the matter of the assignment, as you, were you only a man, would instantly see. The assignment was a simple act of justice, and being so it has the fixedness of law. It pleases me as it is, and I may trust you to be generous enough to allow me to consult my pleasure in the matter.

Other things we will talk of when we meet. I fear your remedy would be far too heroic in its character. "Stepping Westward" may be good in the Old World but not in the New. You remember the fate of Ulysses when "*vecchio e tardo*" he set forth "*diretro al sol.*"

Sincerely yours

C. E. NORTON

In this visit to the University of Kansas, I had the pleasure of meeting, at the house of my sister Mrs. Green, a lately graduated devotee of mathematics, a handsome, buoyant girl, Miss MacKinnon, who ardently wished to carry her specialties beyond any course the University at the time afforded.

When I was again back in Cambridge, I laid Miss MacKinnon's manuscripts and one or two published papers, before Mr. Norton, and Professor Goodwin, and Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson. And I recalled to these men the pitiful memories of the old-time Massachusetts woman, who locked herself in her room to defend her joys from profanation—that is, to escape ridicule—when she worked at her beloved mathematics. Each man, in his own individual way, expressed concern for the development of so marked abilities. To Mr. Higginson Miss Mackinnon's "story" gave the incentive of one of his essays published in a periodical of the Harper house. Mr. Norton, his letters here witness, spoke to men I did not know and otherwise generously engaged himself.

SHADY HILL, 18 Apl. 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am sorry to have to send you this unsatis-

factory note of Professor Byerly's. I wish that Miss MacKinnon would address an application to the President and Fellows of Harvard University asking permission to attend certain courses in the Graduate School; and enclosing this note of Professor Byerly's as her ground for doing so.

Professor Byerly tells me that the Mathematical Department is strong at the University of Michigan, & the teaching excellent in the advanced courses.

I thank you for your note accompanying the Index to Part V. I have not yet had leisure, I am sorry to say, to look over the Index.

Very truly yours

C. E. NORTON.

Miss Kate Stephens.

My note of the twentieth of April, 1892

The advices which you sent me yesterday are on the way to Miss Mackinnon. I sincerely thank you for what you have done for her. Your intercession will help her case. I hope she will follow your suggestion of application to the Overseers of Harvard.

Life goes on growing ever narrower after one is twenty-one, and limitations, whether they come from without or within, increase so painfully with years, that I feel we can not lay too broad

opportunity before young people and give them too great hope and faith in their own strength and purposes. I should like to see every one of them conquering a world. And so often it turns out that the only world they are set to conquer is the best within themselves. I say this mindful of much pain I have seen in others, and remembering also how years ago I wanted to do what you advise this young woman to do. Summer after summer I watched and studied the wording of certain sentences in *The Nation* advisory of fellowships for graduate work at Harvard.

I beg you not to feel in haste about the papers I sent you. Mr. Heath will be still another week in Chicago.

SHADY HILL, 29 April, 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am much pleased that you are to be here, at Shady Hill, this summer, and that you have found a companion who may make the days, I trust, not less solitary, but truly pleasanter by her presence.

I am sorry that your own prospects are not perfectly clear and serene. If any of the clouds arise from questions of employment, perhaps I may be able to help to disperse them.

I finished on Wednesday a brief course of Lectures which I have been giving to the Art

School of the Museum of Fine Arts. They have taken up more time than they were worth. I am now free to give some little time to other things, and this morning I gave to the Readers. I hope to finish with them, and to return the Contents to you on Monday.

Pray be at ease in regard to keeping my books. While you have them I have a pleasant, however delusive sense of their being of use.

Sincerely Yours

C. E. NORTON

I enclose a note which will amuse you. I sent word to the poor woman that I was sorry, but I saw no chance for her here.

Will you kindly let Miss Sedgwick know if you would like to hear of the woman who, she thought, might make a good servant for you?

Miss Kate Stephens.

SHADY HILL, 6 May, 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am sorry to have kept these "Contents" so long, but from day to day some new reason for delay arose.

In No. 1, I have made scarcely any changes or suggestions. No. 2 seemed to me to want lighting up, and to contain some things which would be better placed in No. 3. I have made pencilled sug-

gestions on the MS. No. 3 seemed on too uniform a level, too heroic; so this too I have tried to make lighter. And in Nos. 4 and 5 I have made some changes which I hope will approve themselves to you.

On the whole the books seem to me fairly good. I dare say that we shall still find changes and improvements to be made in them.

Sincerely Yours

C. E. NORTON

I send with this the *Lyra Elegantiarum* which contains most of the new pieces which I have selected.

SHADY HILL, 15 May, 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

My delay in replying to your note has been occasioned by my absence for a day or two in New York.

I had already written to Mr. Heath before your note reached me, and none of the qualifications which you suggest had occurred to me. I lack the subtlety of your womanly genius to enable me to discover them. I told Mr. Heath that I thought you would make an excellent editor of his proposed series, and that he would be fortunate if he secured your services.

I find your list of proposed books very good; it contains a few titles about which I should have some question, I mean as to their popularity. If anything should come of it, I shall be glad to revise it carefully with you.

I have had a satisfactory interview with Mr. — in regard to the illustrations for the Readers.

Sincerely Yours
C. E. NORTON

Miss Kate Stephens

Meanwhile Miss MacKinnon had followed Mr. Norton's wishes, in his letter of the eighteenth of April, and addressed an application to the President and Fellows of Harvard University asking permission to attend certain courses in the Graduate School. In answer, she received the following formal note:—

"At the meeting of the President and Fellows of Harvard College in Boston, May 9, 1892, the request of Miss Annie L. McKinnon that she be allowed to attend courses in higher Mathematics in the Graduate School was considered, and the Secretary was directed to say to Miss MacKinnon that such a request can not now be granted by the University."

CAMBRIDGE, 23 May, 1892.

Dear Miss Stephens,

I thank you for letting me know the issue of Miss MacKinnon's application. It was what I anticipated, but none the less regret. I return her letter, for I think you may like to keep it; though you are kind enough to tell me not to take the trouble to return it.

Let me thank you for your kind offer to copy my Introduction. I cannot accept it, for I shall have to copy it only in case that, when I read it over, I find something to change.

Sincerely Yours

C. E. NORTON

SHADY HILL, 4 June, 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

When I last spoke to you of summer plans I said that I thought that the house here would be ready for your occupancy about the middle of this month. But I now find that my daughters and Richard want to be here on the 24th, his Class Day, and therefore we shall not go away to Ashfield until the 27th or 28th.

I shall greatly regret this change of plan if, as I fear, it may cause you inconvenience or disappointment. It is a great satisfaction to me to think of your being here during our absence.

Richard is going to sail for Europe on the 30th, and this adds to our desire to be with him during his last days in Cambridge previous to his departure.

I am,

Sincerely Yours

C. E. NORTON

The second and third paragraphs of the following letter refer to my repetition of the earnest wish I expressed to Mr. Norton the year before (see foregoing page 21), that is, the wish to pay my summer house rent by doing some work he needed done.

ASHFIELD, 12 July, 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

Your note gives me real pleasure for two reasons,—that you are finding Shady Hill pleasant, and that Mr. Heath has employed you for work, which whatever may be its drawbacks, is of an agreeable nature, not exhausting, and for a time affording you a moderate livelihood. I wish it might be the means of introducing you to work more appropriate to your taste and ability, and more remunerative in all senses.

You are quite wrong in fancying that the work

you did for me last summer was in any respect unsatisfactory. It was done entirely to my liking. No one could have done it better. It saved me much trouble. You are very good to offer to do more for me, but you must remember that if you have a sense of obligation to me, which is burdensome to you, I also have one of obligation to you for occupying and taking care of Shady Hill during our absence. This is no fancied obligation but a real one. Even if the obligation were not mutual, you ought not to let your sense of it trouble you; you should have more confidence in the pleasure resulting from it at least being mutual.

But since you ask me so earnestly to let you work for me, there is a piece of work which I am glad to ask you to do. I want the Index to Longfellow's Dante adapted to mine, by changing the references from Canto and Verse, to Canto and page. If you are willing to do this for me so that the printers can have it by the first of September, it will be a real service to me, and I shall be very much obliged to you. I will ask Margaret to supply you with the books,

I am interrupted,—& must finish hastily.

Sincerely Yours
C. E. NORTON

ASHFIELD, 16 July, 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am truly sorry for the disappointment caused by Mr. Heath's change of mind. There is one source of comfort in it, however, that possibly such other occupation as you may now find may be more agreeable to you, and better suited to your abilities, than that which Mr. Heath offered.

I am sorry, too, that you feel it to be so hard to ask for what you should ask for with as little effort as you would ask for a glass of water. I shall be much pleased to have you "refer" to me; still more pleased if such reference should prove to be of service to you.

We too have been haying and finding it one of the chief pleasures of the summer. I am a farmer up here and like it better than being a professor.

Sincerely Yours

C. E. NORTON

ASHFIELD, 15 Sept. 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

Although I have thanked you vicariously for your interesting letter of six weeks ago, and for the excellent Index which you were so kind as to make for me,—my conscience will not rest till I have thanked you for them myself,—which, accordingly, I now do. I should not have delayed

doing so had I not been less able than usual this summer to accomplish the work that was on my hands.

I hope that you have made a satisfactory agreement for employment with Messrs. Harper & Brothers,—and for employment which will not be mere drudgery but will be pleasant to you. I think you will find them not disagreeable in your dealings with them. My own relations with them have been pleasant; and if I can be of any service to you in your business with them you must not deprive me of the pleasure of being so.

I am glad that the summer at Shady Hill has passed pleasantly with you and Miss Buckingham. I wish that the summer were longer. Already autumn has reached our hills, and is clothing them with her imperial purples and gold.

We propose to return to Shady Hill on the 24th.
Believe me,

Sincerely Yours
C. E. NORTON

V

Prophete rechts, prophete links,
Das Weltkind in der Mitten.

Wolfgang von Goethe

AMONG the books lining one side of Mr. Norton's study was a fine edition of Cicero. One damp summer morning I chanced to lean back in rest from work, and to look up at the very moment a leather label on the back of one of Tully's books disengaged itself and floated to the floor.

I thought at once how the label might be lost if I were to lay it on the desk—if I were not immediately to paste it back on its book. And I recalled that I had seen a couple of step-ladders, in a back hall—ordinary, rational step-ladders, they looked. One the *corps domestique* had outlawed for rebellion when on duty. But this fact I did not then know.

It took me not many minutes to bring the first ladder I came to, set it alongside the books, and mount with the leather label in one hand, and a bottle of glue in the other.

The ladder I had chosen, however, was the one

whose bone and sinews suffered instincts of revolt. I had barely reached the top when the monster without warning—its swift, silent action impressed one as if of malice aforethought—folded itself together. It was long and strong, and as it crashed to the floor it stretched its rude length to where a tall, Greek-Etruscan vase of grey clay stood in a corner. The vase fell shattered in many pieces,

When I raised my head and looked about my misery was beyond telling. Bruises and shock seemed nothing compared with the destruction of the vase.

I at once wrote to Mr. Norton and told him what had happened. In answer he sent the letter next following.

I am morally bound to add that after searching for a man skilled in the art of putting together and cementing broken vessels, I found an expert in such work at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. After a number of weeks he had, at the Museum, rebuilt the vase, and then Miss Buckingham wrapped it in shawls and carried it in a coupé, to Shady Hill. From that time on, so far as I know, it stood in its wonted corner, bearing slight witness to the stroke of the colossus of a step-ladder and my unhappy zeal to preserve Cicero's leather label.

ASHFIELD, 21 Sept. 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

I feel so much sympathy for you, and am so sorry that such a trying accident should have occurred to you, that I have no room for other regret in connection with the breaking of the vase. One must be very young or very unreasonable to care so much for any possession that the loss of it would ruffle his mind, unless it be through his own fault:—then, he may reproach himself. One of these old vases is none the worse for being broken,—the Chinese used to break some of their most precious porcelains in order to show how perfectly they could be mended, & to give them an additional value. Most of the most beautiful Greek vases have been found broken. So do not mind this break any more than you *must*, which, I am sure, will be far more than you ought.

I thank you for your kind purpose of replacing the label on one of the volumes of the little Cicero. It is pretty little copy, but the bindings have suffered from the heated air of the upper shelves.

The accident to the vase had one pleasant consequence. I had not had a thought of the vase all summer, but to-night I am living over again the day of days twenty-two years when I found it at Chiuse. Such memories are worth stirring.

I thank you alike for your words and your silence in regard to the sorrows of this summer & the last.

Very sincerely Yours

C. E. NORTON

I trust that you yourself were not hurt or jarred by your fall. I was thinking so much more of your trouble at the accident, that I did not say this at first, as I should have done.

SHADY HILL, 5 Oct. 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am glad to sign the accompanying paper.

If you can spare time to come some morning to see me we will talk over the woodcuts and other matters.

I hope you are comfortable and at ease in your cot. Is the door wide enough to admit a visitor?

Sincerely Yours

C. E. NORTON

The following was written on Mr. Norton's personal card, reverse side, and left in my door one afternoon when I was away:—

Dear Miss Stephens,

I am sorry not to see you. I thank you for your note & for the "Notes," which are *excellent*. I

doubt whether the footnote in respect to their being prepared for teachers is worthwhile. They are good enough to stand on their own merits.

Sincerely Yours
C. E. N.

SHADY HILL, 18 Dec. 1892

Dear Miss Stephens,

Here are some letters worth reading. Some of Mr.——'s suggestions seem to me worth heeding, —the only ones of the kind I have ever got from Mr. Heath.

The English Readers he refers to in his letters are worthless.

I thank you for the *Blue Book* & your notes on it.

Will you take note of what seems good in Mr. ——'s letters & then return them to Mr. Heath? We will talk of them when we meet before long.

Sincerely Yours
C. E. NORTON

Miss Kate Stephens

My note of the third of March, 1893

I have gone through the manuscripts and hearkened to some of the advices of Mr. —— and Mr. —— I do not think I can do more with the matter, and so I send you word that it is ready for

you to look at. Because I am apt to be away in the afternoon, I think it would be best for you to set a time, or two or three times, in one of which you would come. But that would force you to write, and to save you let me name next Monday, or Tuesday, after five o'clock. If you should wish any other hour, I will be at home.

I have taken out half of Mrs. Barbauld's pieces. There are still six. A few other pieces I have transposed.

The best thing said by Mr. Heath's reviewers was, I think, that regarding the use of the word *Reader*. There is popular dislike to the word because, I suppose, it has so long connoted something exceedingly meagre, and, moreover, because there has been much talk about studying "wholes" and "authors" in all ambitious teachers-associations. *Readers* suggests, I think, what is fragmentary and flimsy and fitted to the cast-iron *One, Two, Three, Four* to which pedagogic science has relegated the undeveloped mind. Would it not therefore be better to call ours *The Heart of Oak Books, Number One, Number Two, &c*; or *The Heart of Oak Series, First Book, Second Book, &c*? I think that then our books might not be condemned by teachers on the ground of the inequality of grade—say that of our *Second Book*

with Gubbin's Third Reader. I see a tendency to condemn for such reasons in these three letters of the superintendents. If ours are called *Series*, or *Books*, the *conscience didactique* might then permit our Second Book to be used along with other Third, or Fourth, Readers.

ASHFIELD, 15 July, 1893

My dear Miss Stephens,

I thank you for your note enclosing Mr. Heath's letter to you. It is a real pleasure to me to think of Miss Buckingham and you at Shady Hill,—for reasons which, I fear, are not free from a taint of selfishness. I am afraid, however, that you are both doing your best to spoil Gobbo, and were he not a good dog (I mean if he were no better than a common child) I should look to seeing your attempt successful.

I wrote, at once, to Mr. Heath that the new proposal was entirely unacceptable. He, poor man, has to bear many disappointments from us!

The books which I left on the table all belong to him. I had found nothing in them to our purpose. "Blue Beard" will be a good addition to our list, if it be not objectionable from the point of view of the fastidious moralist. Is it not too "old" for the second book? "The Seven Champions of

Christendom" used to seem dull to me when I was a child. Have you thought of taking some further stories from Grimm, or have we got all the best already?

Please give my kindest regards to Miss Buckingham, & believe me

Sincerely Yours

C. E. NORTON

Pardon the ill looks of my note. The evening is very damp & my pen, paper & blotter all suffer from the weather.

My note of the sixteenth of July, 1893

Yesterday morning I posted to you a roll of the proof of the Second and Third Books, all of it (except the pages from the ninety-ninth to the one hundred and twenty-eighth of the Third Book) in the second state. I thought you might like to turn over the sheets for a final look at the whole matter, and also see the few notes I have added.

It will be necessary to add to the Second Book—as I have already written. But the Third seems, so far as I have Mr. Heath's estimate of pages, large enough.

When I get the proof of the part I shall add to the Second Book, I will send it to you if you wish.

The printers demur to my wishes for marginal

notes on the ninety-second page of the Third Book, and also upon initial page of the Second Book.

You seemed very tired before you left. Here the air has been cool and clear—I take it it must be better in Ashfield—and I hope you are already much rested.

ASHFIELD, 27 July, 1893

Dear Miss Stephens,

I was much obliged to you for sending me the proof sheets. In looking them over I found the promise of the book not altogether unsatisfactory,—as fair, perhaps, as that of most human undertakings. Your part seemed to me very well done.

The gap in Book II. is difficult to fill, for, if I remember rightly, we found it hard to collect material for it when we at first set about doing so. But your suggestion of Lamb's "Adventures of Ulysses" is happy,—if there be not too much of it. I should be sorry not to give the whole. In case any objection to it should arise,—have you thought of Hawthorne's "Grandfather's Chair" or his "Wonder Book" as sources to draw from; or (possibly) Ruskin's "King of the Golden River."

I hope that the days are passing quietly & cheerfully with you. They are going thus with

us here;—I have not yet caught up with that fair nymph, Leisure, but I hope to do so before long. I am glad to have the good account of Gobbo which you give me. He has a rival here in the soft-eared Sancho.

With kindest regards from us all, I am

Sincerely Yours

C. E. NORTON

In this summer, or fall, of 1893 Mr. Norton wrote the following to aid the publishers in their announcements forerunning publication.

CONTENTS AND CHARACTER OF THE HEART OF OAK BOOKS

Book I is made up of old nursery rhymes and traditional scraps of verse, of well-known simple fables, and of universally popular stories such as *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Tom Thumb*. Every child who is to share in the imaginative life of the English-speaking race should be familiar with its contents.

Book II consists largely of the most widely known fairy tales such as *Cinderella* & *Puss in Boots*, & of old stories for children such as *Goody Twoshoes*, and *The Children in the Wood*; it ends with *The Adventures of Ulysses* as told by

Charles Lamb. It includes also many brief poems fitted to interest young children who have already learned to read.

Book III combines with fictitious stories of adventure, such as *Sinbad the Sailor*, the narrative of true experience such as is contained in passages from *Franklin's autobiography*, and tales of heroic and romantic deed, in extracts from the *Morte d'Arthur* and in Old Ballads, together with accounts of actual historic incidents in passages from *Scott's Tales of a Grandfather*, and from the *Life of Nelson* by Southey. The poetry in this volume is mainly of two strains,—the heroic, and that inspired by & inspiring the love of nature.

Books IV & V. The contents of these volumes include stories in prose and verse, essays on subjects likely to be of interest to youth, tales of memorable deeds, and narratives of the lives of great men. They are a large storehouse of the best writing of the masters in English literature,—from Sidney, Spenser, & Shakespeare to Carlyle, Arnold & Ruskin, to Emerson, Longfellow & Lowell,—and they contain ample variety for every taste, and for wide culture.

The main object of these books has been set forth in the Introduction which is printed in Book II, but it may be said, in brief, concerning them

that they offer a body of good literature and interesting reading for youth such as cannot be found elsewhere in similar selection and compact form.

VI

Set thy heart aright, and constantly endure, and make not haste in time of trouble.

Whatsoever thou takest in hand, remember the end, and thou shalt never do amiss.

Ecclesiasticus

ABOUT the time we came to the typesetting of the Books, the publisher wrote me that he would like to have Mr. Norton's name alone on the title pages. He followed this shift by asking what I would take to take mine off.

I answered that justice forbade my taking my name off the title pages; that the form we had agreed to was merely recognition of my practically taking hold of the work and carrying through the desire he, in 1891, had expressed to own a series of Readers; that my name standing as junior editor—a part of his original proposition upon which the structure of the Books stood—would aid me in the commercial, pseudo-literary world in which I expected to make my living; that the scholarship of the Books was, in part, mine—the Notes especially were independently mine and

must be so construed—and what I had done had right to recognition in accord with our founding agreement. Therefore my name should stand on the title pages. Moreover, we must not forget, the time spent in awaiting pedagogic criticisms, and then in getting the Books in final shape had far exceeded the one year's time he had set in his original estimate of the labor and my emolument.

The questionable proposition of the publisher I did not at the time tell Mr. Norton. To repeat it would have seemed to me gossip-mongering, and an appealing for sympathy or intervention.

All of which goes to prove the measureless solitude of life—how isolated the human soul—how untouchably remote its course and impenetrable its action. I did not dream that incomprehensible deeds might result from not speaking. If anyone had suggested what finally evented, I should have said, "Impossible." When I refused the publisher's alluring proffer of a ready tribute if I would take my name from the title pages, I thought the matter dismissed forever.

We had got the plates in print form. My work was done. No cloud stood above the Cambridge horizon. But over my affairs in the Mid-

dle West a storm was gathering. When I said good bye, Mr. Norton expressing wishes that I would find conditions better than they promised, added; "Be at rest about things here. I will look after them." I went away warm with gratitude for his concern and kindness.

In Saint Louis, in those days, certain real estate speculators had brought suit against me—whom, mistaking for a Frog-Pondian, they denominated by that superlatively estimable title, "a Boston Old Maid." Clever realtors they were. "Littered under Mercury," and snappers up of "unconsidered trifles," they aimed to get hold of the title of a house that stood in my name—a house whose old brick walls I had worked with all my might to keep from tumbling headlong into the bottomless pit.

One tenth of the then immediately succeeding months I had to be in Saint Louis to defend my legal rights of the title. The other nine months in New York endeavoring to earn money to pay Saint Louis lawyers, Saint Louis taxes, Saint Louis assessments for the city's new sewer; re-plumbing of the house when thieves broke in and carried away the original lead pipes; re-roofing when a tornado tore off the original copper covering. Like Paul, one time of Tarsus, I was often

in perils; in perils of waters; in perils of robbers; in perils of mine own countrymen; in perils among false brethren.

To pay for these simple, puckish pleasantries of society at large and nature at large, and to buy the day's loaf, I had to seek market for my work. These were the reasons I was in New York. This the senior editor and publisher knew. Each man had my several addresses.

The first edition of *The Heart of Oak Books* came out. Critical examination found errors in typography. I had read proof and made corrections. Mr. Norton had had in his hands, for leisurely consideration as his foregoing letters testify, my copy and proof. One naturally supposes that he examined each state. Each he endorsed, as his letters tell.

Comparison of the printed Books with the original copy was impossible. Before the errors were discovered, proof and copy had lighted winter fires at Shady Hill.

I was far away. Bluff at hand. 'Ο *καιρός*, as the old Greeks called the point of time for action, offered itself. They laid the typographical errors at my door.

The publisher had now got what, during the making of the Books, he had come to desire—what he had asked for, and intimated he would

give me money for, and what I had refused to permit—this, namely, that Mr. Norton's name should stand alone on the title pages.

Adam's psychosis, its infinite variety, age can not wither nor custom stale. Since the first man whined to the Lord of the Garden of Eden that "the woman" had upset paradise, cowardice and mendacity of men have made "the woman" the scapegoat.

In the parasitisms of human life the male parasite I have found less decently reserved than the female. Men, without appearance of discomfort or shame, have asked me for and taken money they knew I (being one whom postulants seek in their adversities more often than in their prosperities) had earned; others have appropriated my copy; and again others sought my aid to correct and place their writings or fix themselves in posts—from college professors (how their benign, wearied faces tug at one's heart strings!) to furnace tenders—yes, even to the johnny-on-the-spot priest, a profiteering by-product of my family charity, who vaulted from poverty and no ropes to pull in Kansas to the trapeze of a fat parish in New York.

These truths about Adamite parasites I do not state with bitterness. In the realm of truth there is no bitterness. I smile—even my pen smiles

—at the humor of certain gyrations of beneficiaries, for instance, the proxy priest's. Avoidance of expression of obligation is all through history. To the Great Example, of ten lepers healed one returned with thanks. Remembering fine sensibilities of gratitude for a few of my efforts, and overlooking occasional sham and treachery, I am merely relating a cold biological fact—just as if I were to say that scientists tell of a fish which, strong from the crunching of coral on which it lives, sometimes gnaws its way out when a shark swallows it.

Looked at in this distance of time, I see Mr. Heath's act may have been retaliatory—perhaps unconsciously retaliatory. He may have become weary of negation. He had a genial nature. He fulfilled Nathaniel Hawthorne's characterisation of Mr. S. C. Goodrich, "a gentleman of many excellent qualities, although a publisher." Like all constructive optimists he had opinions. Naturally, too, anxieties about the work we were engaged in, and he flooded us with suggestions. To this Mr. Norton's letters bear witness. And the same letters also evidence that a conscientious literary sense and taste did not permit us to accept what he offered.

I often saw the publisher. He sent not a few manuscripts for me to read, and at times blue-

pencil edit, during the year I had pledged my time for the Readers—plenary indulgences, as it were, from his house, works of supererogation for me. The name of but one of the manuscripts springs to mind at this moment, and that because of its unforgettable singularities and association with a romantic's surname—Julian Hawthorne's "American Literature."

From the start I transacted all the business between the two men. If Mr. Norton wanted to say anything to Mr. Heath, he asked me to deliver the message. If Mr. Heath had some minor suggestion for Mr. Norton, would I kindly, when next we discussed selections, tell the senior editor. Pressure increased gradually, cumulatively, as such intangibilities do, before I realized that I had the uncomfortable post of telling one man what the other man said, or wished—a post which need of daily bread refused to let me toss aside as soon as I discovered and to myself defined it. So long as he got the business through, neither man seemed to care, perhaps quite naturally, what my position might be.

I often saw Mr. Heath, I say, and at those times the burden fell to me of telling him we could not take our material from books and suggestions he offered. His literary tastes, that is, we could not always agree with. Possibly, even as

I have suggested, I became identified with negation in his mind. His self-esteem and native positivism may have revolted from our repeated nullifying. Perhaps his resentment fell on me. This, and more probably, expanding ambition for his venture in the now ready Books, burst its first seed-pod. By some artifice he inveigled Mr. Norton. No voice was near to speak for me.

Why did I not protest, and protect my rights and work in the Books by legal action?—with evidence such as I had in my hands?

I was so overcome, so distraught, my thoughts so introverted to my tasks, that I could not, at the time recall the clear evolution of our action. Mr. Heath's letters I had destroyed. They had become "like chaff on the summer threshing floor; and the wind carried them away." Our original agreement for the building of the Books was by word of mouth. Mr. Norton's letters I had not seen since I received them one at a time, as our work developed. What they would tell, read consecutively, as a whole, I did not know. Locked in book-boxes, they were stored with a friend in Cambridge.

To repeat: When report reached me that Mr. Norton and Mr. Heath had united and were purposing to do what appeared to me an impossible deed because it would be so grossly unjust, namely,

take my name from the title pages of the little work, and make over the Books without advising with me, I was so astounded at the proceeding, and at the time so weighed down by cares and worn with the labor of each day, that I lost power of protest. In great crises one who has to act, or speak, stands stripped of choice—what is possible one does.

The moral world seemed shaken to its foundation. Judgment had been turned to worm-wood. Rectitude of life and honesty of purpose there appeared none. I felt as if I myself had died, and the shell only remained. Lines in the Commemoration Ode of Mr. Norton's friend often repeated themselves to me;

“And some innate weakness there must be
In him who condescends to victory
Such as the Present gives, and can not wait,
Safe in himself as in a fate.”

Years — a lifetime — of misrepresentation loomed before me. For all who knew me knew that I was engaged in building the Books. And periodicals, such as *The Evening Post* of New York and *The Critic* of New York, had published advance notices and named me as junior editor.

VII

Blame I can bear, but not blameworthiness.
Truth is truth how e'er it strike.

Robert Browning

WHAT changed Mr. Norton? What inspired his *volte-face*?—from the joint editor, seemingly considering my advantage, to a silent, underhanded antagonist?—in a business which had come to him through my energy and judgment and had carried genial relations through nearly three years.

I have tried to explicate the mystery—in the sun-clearness of day, and nights through the watches that fall when darkness is in the fulness of its revelations. And others have tried and could not. A Harvard official told me my experience was not solitary—that he knew a man who had a fortune like to mine. A numb, shocked body, and in spirit “the tonic of a wholesome pride” kept me from asking who the man and what the work.

Months passed. The publishers issued a four-page circular dated the twenty-second of March,

1894. It bore the name of a master in a boys' school, and effusively and profusively advertised the Books—"the high purpose and rare art with which they are graded through the five volumes."

"It would be an impertinence for me to commend the taste of the editor of these books," said the circular, evidently addressing the publishers, "but your patrons may be assured that they may safely trust the literary judgment of the personal friend of Carlyle, Ruskin, and Lowell, and the editor of their works. All are to be congratulated that such talent has been enlisted in this cause." "Parents . . . have but to be supplied with the table of contents . . . to realize their great opportunity and to bless both editor and publisher for the greatest boon bestowed upon them in this generation."

These excerpts make clear the pamphleteer's fibre. How ill-founded his first assertion quoted above, letters given in these pages show. The folder ended with an assurance which pointed a finger—rather, a whole semaphore's arm—at himself. "A second edition will remove all errors in text and punctuation."

The second edition came out. Title pages substantiated rumors. The senior editor's name stood alone. But he had developed a note of "acknowledgments" in which he used my name, adding

the phrase that without my "help the Books would not have been made." Truth of this last assertion you will not deny, if you read understandingly the first chapters of this chronicle.

I pondered long the ethical perceptions of the publisher and senior editor—believing fidelity to one's word a fundamental, the most important of the laws of human society.

Then I wrote Mr. Heath that in the second edition of *The Heart of Oak Books* my name did not stand where our agreement said it should stand, that is, on the title pages; and that if he used my name in the Books in any other than the place that he and I, and later the senior editor, had agreed to use it, I should be obliged, in self-defense, to carry his action to the courts.

I do not know what the publisher did with this, my letter of notification. I merely know that, after I sent the letter, Mr. Norton, again without a word of inquiry about my wish or taste, took my name out of the second edition's "acknowledgments," and inserted these words; "I regret that I am not allowed to mention by name one without whose help the Books would not have been made, and to whose hand most of the Notes are due."

The ipsedixitism of this purely papal act and pronouncement is almost humorous. *He him-*

self has spoken. Nothing remained to one caught in the toils but to submit to the almighty word.

Copyrighted in 1895 and 1905, *The Heart of Oak Books* carried this assumption. They carry it still (1926). In the publishers' house the Books are listed as Mr. Norton's. In libraries they are catalogued as Mr. Norton's.

"I regret that I am not allowed to mention by name one without whose help the Books would not have been made, and to whose hand most of the Notes are due." This sentence, the smirch upon my professional competence that the different editions, aided by tales from Mr. Heath's house, bore abroad, and an arrested tuberculosis cavity in my left lung, are the sole testimonies that remain to me to-day, of my labor for the Books, and the pledges of the senior editor and publisher at the outset of our making the Books.

Nowhere do I know a plainer example of the rule Arthur Hugh Clough—Mr. Norton's friend—sings;

"Each for himself is still the rule:
We learn it when we go to school—
The devil take the hindmost, O!

And when the schoolboys grow to men,
In life they learn it o'er again—
The devil take the hindmost, O!

From youth to age, whate'er the game,
The unvarying practise is the same—
The devil take the hindmost, O!"

Delicacy of feeling has, in the face of such violence, the fortune of summer gossamer before a West India hurricane. Reserve, reticence, is as if it had never been. Equity was on my side; and law. But I kept silent. Judgment at large inclines to declare that silence proves guilt.

We have all read how a simple Balkan people betook themselves to petitions On High, and non-resistant meetings in their churches, when the Turks stormed through their part of Europe; and how the holocaust of the supplicants, and their churches, lighted and warmed the Mussulmans' further on-marching. In minuscule the fate was mine. Time went on. It seemed useless to hope for ultimate disclosure of the right.

In any evaluation there is one criterion only—
Truth.

VIII

Ἡ θαυματὰ πολλά,
Καί πού τι καὶ βροτῶν φάτις
Ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀληθῆ λόγον
Δεδαιδαλμένοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις
Ἐξαπατῶντι μῦθοι.

Pindar

PRESIDENT WALKER of Harvard, in commemorating Professor Andrews Norton, father of Mr. Norton, wrote; "His mind was eminently positive, and, in this sense, despotic. He came before his classes, not as one in the act of seeking the truth, but as one who had found it." Then there is Emerson's reference to Andrews Norton in his Journal; "the old tyrant of the Cambridge Parnassus."

Seizure and assumption of supreme authority in the business of The Heart of Oak Books may not have been due solely to conceptions springing from personal power—settled ease in practical affairs and life in a neighborhood of adulators. The assumption may have been a throw-back. Character is in great measure hereditary. A

woman living in otiosity and seclusion under Cambridge elms—a quaint spirit who bore a surname distinguished in New England annals—once told that in their youthful years his intimates dubbed Mr. Norton “Pope Charles.” In his later life he joyed in referring himself to absolutists—men who pretended that they, and they alone, could interpret the Supreme Power of the Universe—“a race of preachers” who supported their pretensions to pontificality by what time, larger knowledge and freer expression of the normal human mind have proved fungoid dogma.

Then, also, not improbably the estimates of women as Garden of Eden creations on a demi-urge’s second thought, ancillary ribs, handmaids, left hands, may have survived, unconscious to their host, with faith in uncontradictable manhood and love of and pride in power—the inflexibility of temper and autocephalic dictation more often seen in Mr. Norton’s generations than in this present century. Most leniently let us recall that to those forbears of his in whom we have said Mr. Norton especially delighted, faithful little girls dropped courtesies and wreathed their faces in smiles when the ecclesiastic autoocrats passed along the roadside. The senior editor of *The Heart of Oak Books* may have anticipated genuflexions when he agreed with the

publisher and took away my rights in those Books.

But the junior editor was not born with the disposition which makes pilgrimages to Canossa—however audacious the excommunicating ban. The snow she would not mind. Snow is exquisite. She would not mind standing immobile and watching the three-times passing through the sky of the just and all-seeing sun. Unspeakably harder than enforced inaction and bitter frost would be the spiritual pretense and assumption of a Gregory-Hildebrand that could force her to take on others' error, and then put her before the world in the sackcloth of a penitent.

Faith in and practise of the subordination of women, I repeat—the unspoken jealousy of masculine prerogative, stirred when the human female seems to have won even slight ascendancy—may have prevailed with Mr. Norton. I remember one morning—I give out the trifle with utmost reluctance and only because it goes to untie the knot—I remember one morning when he referred to an industriously devoted couple in Cambridge, the one to her Wellesley women, the other to his Harvard men, as “Mr. and Mrs. Alice Freeman Palmer.”

During our building of the Books, we spoke one day of Wordsworth's “Rob Roy's Grave,” and I quoted the verses which include the lines;

“the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.”

That the art of the poem did not meet our requirements for the Books we agreed; and I added, “I don’t believe in its teachings either—ethics of the jungle,” idly ending “Do you?”

Mr. Norton’s “It’s what prevails,” and assenting nod startled me. I wondered about it afterwards. I could interpret it in no other way than avowel of such ethics. This was one of the instances when he seemed to have a complex, contradictory mind. And yet before me was his turning over to me a percentage of the royalties!

Another happening has also clung like a burr to my memory. One day at his office, when I was making a report on one of those supererogatory manuscripts I have named—this was sometime in the early months of our compilation—Mr. Heath, rubicund as a garnet, tipping back in the spring-seat of his chair, smiling with a countenance which might have belonged to one of the Cheeryble Brothers, cautioned me; “Look out for Mr. Norton. He’s a Jew.”

The outburst struck me like a drop of caustic. I could not answer. Mr. Norton seemed to me dis-

tinguished in his practises of the courtesies—and justices—of life, and an embodiment of consideration for others. Yet, to-day, I see a sardonic humor in the publisher's admonition, when I recall how Mr. Norton, after we had settled into friendly acquaintance in our work, shrewdly warned me, *ipsissima verba*, "Look out for Mr. Heath. He's a Jew."

Mr. Norton's traditional breeding—code of honor as to what a gentleman may and may not do—kept him silent in ensuing time, so far as I know, about the long history of The Heart of Oak Books.

Mr. Heath's reaction to conditions he had created was otherwise. "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer then oil, yet they were as drawn swords." He seemed actively vindictive. A singular trait in human beings is that they vengefully pursue those they have wronged.

This little scene testifies:—When I was editorially connected with The —— house, a male of the nosey, talebearing, swashing sort, a Roister Doister marvelling "How did God make me such a goodly person?", a man—more exactly a legal tender for a man—came, one day, to my room, and, pursing his weak and slaving mouth,

began to babble how, after a dinner a night or two before, at a meeting with which publishers were identified, he had heard a member of the Heath house tell about the making of a series of books published by his firm, how a woman, who he said, "helped" the editor, had been so incompetent that her work had to be done over. "You knew Boston then," the visitor went on, leaning over the corner of my desk and taking on an aggressive manner, "Who was the woman? From what Mr. — said, I thought it must be you."

Stung beyond silence and what might seem consent to the story, after the babbling boob made his unpremeditatedly hasty exit I went straight to the office of the President of The — Company. "Do you know," I asked, "that a person reporting Mr. Heath has been saying, at a semi-public dinner here, that my editorial work in Boston was so poor his house had to have it done over?"

The President's answer was a slight start, a lighting up of his face; and then, rapping each word sharply—putting a dash, as it were, between each—he drawled; "That—man's—condemnation—is—to—me—a—recommendation."

I turned back to my work. One soul at least saw the truth. The President never knew how

his penetration and independence had balsamed a sore spirit.

Emissaries such as I speak of above, gave Mr. Heath's tumid tale to the winds. And the winds blew it about—from "literary" gossip to "literary" gossip, from editorial rooms of one publisher to editorial rooms of another publisher. I met it masquerading in various guises, and lived over what the ballad of Chevy Chase tells another of our race lived more than five hundred years ago;

"For when both his leggis wear hewyne in to,
Yet he knyled and fought on hys kne."

IX

God's fruit of justice ripens slow:
Men's souls are narrow; let them grow.
My brothers, we must wait.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

KNOWLEDGE I gained from the business of The Heart of Oak Books so disillusioned me as to honor, genuineness and justice among men that I did not preserve the few letters I received from Mr. Norton after publication of the Books. Whatever value his letters might have had as records of friendliness and the character of a bookman, his acts had destroyed.

I did, however, guarding against possible misinterpretation, keep notes for, or drafts of, my own letters; and here they are. The first is not dated. From its body of facts I infer I wrote it in 1894.

Dear Mr. Norton

In answer to your letter of the nineteenth of June there is much I should like to say. But matters have already gone so far (and wholly without

my knowledge) that speaking now would be vain. Nothing is left me but protest against the mediaeval justice with which you have judged me and meted out your judgment.

If the matter lay with Mr. Heath alone I should enjoin him by legal process, and force him into lines other than those you indicate. But you are involved, and you have shown me courtesy.

You say the revision has given you trouble. I would give much to undo the trouble. You have, however, done what you had in mind two years ago when, one day, you told me; "After the first edition is out we shall want to make the Books over for final form, changing parts, perhaps omitting and perhaps adding something. We can not tell what we shall want to change till we see them in book-form."

If you suppose the first edition of *The Heart of Oak Books* was not put on the market and sold—you say, "I could not allow them to be circulated"; "the cost of which fell on me as responsible editor"—you deceive yourself. Why should not I have shared the "responsibility"? You remember you thought otherwise once. We agreed that in the work there was to be some parity. That would mean that I, if I were so minded, had, for instance, as much right independently to associate with me another for re-

vision of the Books, as you, without any reference to me, to call in the master of a Cambridge school. By the terms of my contract with Mr. Heath, also, my work had that dignity. But to this hour all the good in the Books has been attributed to you with laudation, and whatever was at fault to me with imprecation.

I had a letter from Mr. Heath last year asking me "how much I would take" to let my name drop from the title pages of the Books and let yours stand there alone. When I refused—from which refusal he evidently realized that I was neither amanuensis nor puppet—I did not dream that what he could not get by bullying and other methods which I forbear to characterize, he would take by force and coerce you by plausibilities.

I thank you for your good wishes for me and my work. If another had made them under like conditions, I should think them insincere. I have been editing some books for the —— Company. I say this to you alone, not to Mr. Heath, for he might write a letter disparaging me, as he did once, now two years. And I have been disparaged to the very limit of endurance.

If your wish that I have "congenial" work means work entirely to my taste, the work is not congenial. But it gives me support for the time

being. It also affords me a degree of peace for it rarely takes me beyond my room and Columbia Library.

I enclose a paper. It is the legal paper which makes over to me a part of the royalties of *The Heart of Oak Books*. You recall how you gave it to me in the earlier part of our work—after that first summer when I arranged the Lowell letters. The paper must be destroyed. You are the one to destroy it and so be sure it is out of the world. You have thought me capable of strange things. You surely can not expect I would take those royalties now. I would die first.

Faithfully

KATE STEPHENS

In 1896 I went to Cambridge to bring away my books, and in the packing I came upon a letter which Mr. Heath, saying "Keep it," handed me in 1892. It was from Mr. Norton, written when the publisher was considering my editorship of another series. I remember but one sentence, "Miss Stephens knows English literature." At this time, 1896, when I again happened upon it, I sent Mr. Norton a line to say I was returning this letter, which he knew I had, to Mr. Heath. He wrote offering me another like it. This clears references in the next letter.

NEW YORK 8 March 1896

Dear Mr. Norton

Thank you for good wishes for my welfare.

A letter of the tenor of the one I returned to Mr. Heath would, you know, be nullified by your action about The Heart of Oak Books. Supposing I should offer such a laudatory letter to a business man. He would point to the first edition of The Heart of Oak Books, and then to the second edition—my name off the title pages of the second edition, and the palpable thrust of your “acknowledgments.”

You know that in the whole miserable, inexplicable business I have asked, not for courtesy or compliment, merely for justice. If I could have had justice, we should all have been saved heart-burning.

I hope you are very well. The day I went to work at some old Black Letter in Harvard Library, I looked about with the wish of once more seeing you and Gobbo.

Very truly yours

KATE STEPHENS

NEW YORK 8 August 1896

Dear Mr. Norton

Your note is kind. Thank you for what you say about the writing.

By strangest fortune a piece of news fell out of the sky yesterday—I without a thought of seeking it. A man whose books are widely read called on me. I never saw him before. He came unannounced—and just from Boston. He told me that Mr. Heath paid the Cambridge schoolmaster two thousand and five hundred dollars for his work, and that his additions spoiled The Heart of Oak Books—made them academic, and took from their selling value; in short, that the first edition is the best edition.

To me the whole matter is, I sincerely hope, no more vital than the differences of Anaximenes of Lampsachus and Theopompus of Chios. But the old goddess *Nέμεσις* flashed before me as I listened. How glad I should have been, two summers ago, to live at Shady Hill, as you had asked me, work upon the revision you foretold we should make, and have a fragment of the sum paid the schoolmaster—endeavoring all the time to make good to Mr. Heath irregularities of his publishing house and to keep our Books to their original purity and simplicity and humanness. God moves in a mysterious way—and at such tremendous cost to us *ephemerae*. Must pretence and push be always sitting in the judgment seat!

I can not help adding that I hope the second part of yesterday's report is not true—that is, that

your and your assistant's changes took from the Books' character. Returns for your part of the work have been already long delayed.

At the beginning of this book I wrote that this history is an atom, but, also, in its psychology and events, a minikin of the world; and, therefore, of significance in human life.

And on the foregoing first page I told that since a library, chancing to receive one volume of the first edition of *The Heart of Oak Books*, must, according to laws of cataloguing, distinguish that volume by a special card, I in turn find myself forced to set down explicitly the unvarnished tale of my part in the making of those Books.

That in this writing I have done, under-told my part in the making of the first edition of the series —“taking upon myself the mystery of things, as if I were God's spy.”

Postscript. October 1926.

When I wrote this book I supposed I had complete right to build into its structure letters I received from Mr. Norton while we were editing *The Heart of Oak Books* more than a generation ago. His letters I felt I must enclose because

they gave first-hand accounts and testified to the verity of this history.

After I had brought my book to end, I learned that these letters Mr. Norton had written, letters, I repeat, developed in the business of our book making, a Federal law denied me right to publish "without the consent of the author or proprietor."

I seek to obey the laws, and I sought to obey this Federal law, and wrote asking permission of the "proprietor" to use the letters in my possession; also to include slight quotations from the published "Letters"—submitting copies of letters and excerpts. An answer refused me permission to quote these letters I received from Mr. Norton, saying that nothing in the letters seemed of "a general interest large enough to make their publication really desirable"; "there is nothing which would diminish or increase the stature of" Mr. Norton "in the eyes of the reading public"; the "proprietor" would not "welcome their publication at this late day."

My intention of publishing this book was, however, so settled that I repeated my request. Finally I received a letter in her handwriting, in which the owner of copyright said that if I published it, she would take action "to publicly discredit your book." The correspondence, you perceive, had its humor. It would seem that the

owner of copyright read my earnest request not with understanding heart, but with a mind so set in and moulded by petty conventionalisms as to be incapable of thought of justice or ardor for truth. Of a man who infelicitously rated himself at exaggerated values Mr. Norton one day exclaimed, "He does not know his relation to the universe."

A law offspringing from the life of our race and inherent in our race's sense of honor, a law higher than "an amendment to the Copyright Law" of our Federal Revised Statutes, a law doubtless prior to our Federal law by tens of thousands of years, drives me to publication. This prior and higher law is the right of self-defense when one is attacked, of protection of oneself from defamation, from libel. To take my name from the title pages of *The Heart of Oak Books* without my knowledge and consent was a libelous act.

I must include Mr. Norton's letters in this book because my defense, years ago set aside through memories of courtesies, through struggle to arrest incipient tuberculosis, through what Euripides calls the strengthlessness of women, τὸ δ' ἀσθενές μου καὶ τὸ θῆλυ σώματος, through need of my giving days and years to primary demands of life, can not be made complete without the letters.

Creon forbade Antigone to obey a higher law

of her people. The higher law Antigone obeyed. For which loyalty Creon and his henchmen buried Antigone alive in a rock-pent dungeon. Back in Antigone's time the lower law prevailed—at least prevailed long enough for them to bury Antigone alive in a rock-pent dungeon.

But now? ? ?

EPILOGUE

Even Lord Chesterfield . . . when he came to define a gentleman declared that truth made the distinction.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

A REPORT, common in Cambridge, told that Mr. Norton one day began a lecture before a class at Harvard with these words, "None of you, probably, has ever seen a gentleman."

What is a gentleman? Two definitions stick in my memory, one from a book printed more than two hundred years ago; "a Gentleman born; which by Henry VIII. Statutes is explain'd to be one descended of three Descents of Nobles, viz. of Name and Arms, both of his Father and Mother's side, Gentility not being made perfect or accomplished in the Person in whom it takes its Beginning, but rather by Succession."

The second definition; "Though bred a Presbyterian, and brought up a merchant, he was the finest gentleman of his time," Charles Lamb wrote of his friend Joseph Paice. "I have seen him," continued Lamb, "tenderly escorting a market-woman, whom he had encountered in a shower,

exalting his umbrella over her poor basket of fruit, that it might receive no damage, with as much carefulness as if she had been a countess."

What a gentleman is, who shall say? Carlyle, as reported by Froude, as reported by Mrs. Carlyle, as reported, also by Mr. Norton—Carlyle, son of a Scottish mason by trade and small farmer—was Carlyle a gentleman? Did his wife think him that? Did his American editor? The word gentleman, as to-day used, means a man endowed with general learning and manners more considerate than those commonly ascribed to men who bear the rougher burdens of life.

During years Mr. Norton was Professor of the History of Fine Arts in Harvard University, under a rose-vine porch facing Brattle Street, a barouche drew up fair afternoons in May and a couple stepped from their threshold into the carriage. The dame, lifting a parasol over a bonnet the hue and circumference of a good-sized dahlia, sank back in lace and ruffles. Beside her her husband, an air of urbanity and tranquil superiority emanating from his red and whiskered cheeks, his shining top-hat and ample frock-coat. Solemnly interested in the scene, apparently wordless, dignity in every movement, the comfortable pair rode forth swaying over C springs. They, with their accoutrements, embodied the day's under-

standing of gentle folks. Any Harvard student might look at them. Probably many did. The man's name has for more than a generation stood on the backs of books, on reference shelves in libraries. You would account him a gentleman.

Again, concretely, there was the elder Mr. Houghton, who permitted the junior editor of *The Heart of Oak Books* use of copyrighted material which his house controlled. If an old definition is true—"friendly, yielding, obliging, ready to do a kindness"—he was a gentleman. His disinterested courtesy gave material towards books from which Mr. Norton was to profit. And further, upon my telling just the excerpts we had chosen, he spoke of Mr. Norton's having lately put the delightful, spontaneous "Letters" of Lowell in the hands of the Harper house.

Another example, and of a vastly different character:—Facing Mr. Norton, as he sat in his study, hung a portrait done by Tintoretto—portraiture of a sumptuously clad man of thought and large affairs.

If, directly opposite this dignitary, you happened, one summer afternoon, to sit reading "Coryate's Crudities"—Tom Coryate, him of the "head in form like an inverted sugar-loaf," "the whet-stone of all the wits of that age"—you would, when you came upon the passage about

forks, recall that the year Coryate visited Venice, 1608, was the fourteenth after Robusti died:—

“I observed a custome in all those Italian Cities and Townes through the which I passed,” wrote Thomas, “that is not used in any other country that I saw in my travels, neither doe I thinke that any other nation of Christendome doth use it, but only Italy. The Italian and also most strangers that are commorant in Italy, doe alwaies at their meales use a little forke when they cut meate. . . . This forme of feeding I understand is generally used in all places of Italy, their forkes being for the most part made of yron or steele, and some of silver, but those are used only by Gentlemen. The reason of this their curiosity is, because the Italian cannot by any means indure to have his dish touched with fingers, seeing all mens fingers are not alike cleane.”

Long you would study the portrait facing Mr. Norton's chair. No denying a silver fork to the original of the picture. Old Roman *gravitas* informed his countenance in every feature. And this patrician believed in clothes, if a man's appearance betray his convictions. Could it be that this presentment of his had greeted Mr. Norton's eyes so many mornings that the old Venetian with his varnish of elegance, dolled up, as it were, to meet the “golden pencil” of Tintoret, had factored in

pathing the way to the sentence addressed to Harvard students; "None of you, probably, has ever seen a gentleman"?

Robusti Tintoretto, by the way, so skilled with pigment and brush as to impel the maxim, "the color of Titian and the design of Michel Angelo," did he ever concern himself with whether those sitting before his easel were gentlemen? Necessarily the man who sat for this portrait had money—to gain portrayal. Venice was an elderly republic at the time Tintoretto painted, and the father of Mr. Norton's gentleman may have sent out galleons which brought back carpets from the Orient; or he may have peddled yron and silver forks under the shadow of Saint Mark's—or done something even more plebeian and money-grabbing. No Harvard student, one may be safe in saying, ever saw such a gentleman as this portrait presents.

Strange how time will couple ideas! And strange the offspring of that coupling in practical life! There was Mr. Norton, come to mature years, priding himself upon what he estimated an exclusive stem, seeking as friend a crusty, old Scotsman farmer-poet, who, obedient to the evolving spirit of democracy in the nineteenth century, wrote, and when Mr. Norton was a small child, published, "Sartor Resartus"—"Die Kleider, ihr

Werden und Wirken"—Clothes, their Origin and Influence: von Diog. Teufelsdröckh, J. U. D. Weissnichtwo. 1831.

And, to note another offspring of the democratic spirit, this Norton child had barely come to fourteen years when Thackeray sketched "An Historical Study," his famous triptych depicting Louis the Fourteenth—"Rex," the clothes: "Ludovicus," the puny human: "Ludovicus Rex," the clothes with the manikin inside.

Years before expression of his apparently sweeping doubt if those Harvard students had ever seen a gentleman, Mr. Norton had not enjoyed the American habit of mind. His heart, it appears from his writings, had never been sympathetic with the American people. Nor with the American soil. Through years, and various media, he indicated that he found little of loveliness in his native land. Even the physical aspect of the country, the modicum he ever saw, he, in the prime of life, declared inferior; "Nature certainly did not show half so much poetic imagination in the construction of America as she did in Europe," he wrote Ruskin in 1873. "She finished you off with exquisite elegance and left us very much in the rough."

Such estimate as these were not left to a letter to Mr. Ruskin alone. They were published re-

peatedly in this country during the latter part of the nineteenth century—for instance, in *The Nation*. Their character caught at once and for keep a type of mind—the weaker wing of the poll-parrot type. If you, the reader, have penetration and mental independence, you see that in reality the sentences are rhetoric, peculiarly resonant because they are empty. They betray not only gross ignorance of “the construction of America” from Grand Manan Channel to the Gulf of California, and from the glaciers of Alaska to the palmettos of Florida, but also lack of clarity of thought in their writer.

Mr. Norton speaks of “nature” not showing “poetic imagination in the construction of America.” He can hardly mean the upper air—what the black vulture sees,

“His roads between the thunder and the sun.”

And “nature” includes climate. But the climate of neither the Hebrides, nor Scandinavia, nor the Steppes of Russia, nor of Madrid did nature “finish off” with “exquisite elegance.”

Mr. Norton's sentences must refer to the physical aspect of the country. Yet they do not distinguish between The Creative Hand and what men, laboring through centuries, cultivating the soil to fulfill their needs, have made of “nature.”

Manipulated by The Hand the face of "nature" changes. Sea coasts rise and fall. Mountains build and level. Valleys fill and widen. Lakes and rivers dry up while others spring afresh. Trees, shrubs perish, and new growths burgeon into forests.

Britain can not be what the island was before the last glacier descended upon it; not the same as when Boadicea, defending their subverted liberties, led the Britons against the Romans; not the Britain over which Roman law and discipline built great roads, great walls and forts through four hundred years—the bridge Cæsar's soldiers threw across the Rhine was but a child's line in taking the "rough" off of "nature" in Europe; not the Britain Alfred saw, if we may trust the chronicle of Asser.

Western Europe in its "exquisite elegance" is the result of two thousand years of men's working over and "finishing off" what The Creator offered human needs, and men's impulse and ache to carve themselves, their life, upon the land—the poetry that lingers in natural beauty wrought upon by generations of humans. "Exquisite elegance" in the "nature" of Europe is the unity resulting from men's and women's strong hands and brave hearts laboring and moulding through millenia God's "rough."

Although Mr. Norton could most musically quote Wordsworth's verse about Lucy, who

"Dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,"

and about Poor Susan, and Matthew the village schoolmaster, he would, I think, have felt as little kinship with a simon-pure Anglo-Saxon from our own "untrodden" hinterland—from, for instance, the magical green forests of Wisconsin, or the melancholy, sunlit Staked Plains of Texas—as with a Tuareg fresh from the centre of the Desert of Sahara. In such a rencounter Mr. Norton's attitude would doubtless have reflected what Mr. Lowell called "A Certain Condescension in Foreigners."

Equipped as well as Mr. Norton the autochthon, in size, form, substance and action of brain, and better equipped in physical body. Both, the autochthon and Mr. Norton, inheriting from identical ancestors who lived identical lives, under identical conditions through thousands of years over in the land we call Europe. Ineluctable fate pressed to the lips of their last generations wines of different bouquets. Autochthon quaffed the stimulating ferment of nature's air. His brain served every day's, and every body's, needs. Every body's

and every day's needs made him willy nilly practical. He beat his way through storms in stogies.

Autochthon, therefore, became initiative, earnest, attempting in feeble human way to bring the constructive power he saw in the universe more directly, swiftly and progressively into the affairs of men. He had a fertile mind. An idea planted in it harvested a thousand. Also the spirit of his optimistic people. Manufactured amusements he had none; the zest of play informed his work. His lusty brood became millions—"strong, clean, westernly," as George Moore describes his religion. They are to-day "the mass of the people," "semi-civilized," in Mr. Norton's words.

Mr. Norton's cup, in late generations beading with property gains, held the draught upon which the dilettante flourishes. His had been the slippered ease. Dilettante shuns practical ends. That is in his name—*delectare*, to delight. He coquets with what he has in hand, often gratifies himself with banalities, and his atmosphere is a balm of flowers which court-prejudices pressed, centuries ago, from withered legends. He brings forth little fruit. His stock remark to a constructive autochthon is an inhibitor's, "You can't do it; and, if you can, your methods and men are vile." In general talk, in which he delights to drift, he tells you "there has never yet been any actual equality of

condition between the lives of the well-to-do and cultivated and the lives of those who support themselves by daily manual labor"—never himself being mentally clear about the cultivated who support themselves by daily manual labor. An exotic is dilettante. He should be subject to laws which prescribe health-examinations for aliens. His estimate is not far different from what, under the czars, a Russian landed proprietor said to me of the peasants; "You may call them human, but they do not possess thought, feeling, tastes, desires, spiritual qualities such as I"—the dilettante of America and landed proprietor of Russia forgetting a truer and more exalted vision; "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and . . . things which are despised, to bring to nought things that are."

Each, autochthon and dilettante, inherit the same moral stamina, and the same feeling towards the general society from which both offsprang. And the same *politesse de coeur*—the autochthon showing his inheritance a little more patently. In matters autochthon judges of light weight, dilettante would at times be fastidious. Where dilettante accounts inconsequence, autochthon would hold aloof, declaring in broad, Doric accent, "It is not what a gentleman would do."

To autochthon life is a continual illumination, the current coming in from The Eternal; to diletante a slow snuffing out of the buoyancy and fecund activity of his constructive forbears. "Here are . . . millions of people of whom all but a comparatively small fraction have come up, within two or three generations, from the lower orders of society," wrote Mr. Norton, "They belong by descent to the oppressed from the beginning of history, to the ignorant, to the servile class or peasantry. They have no traditions of intellectual life, no power of sustained thought, no developed reasoning faculty. . . . They are seeking material comfort in a brutal way, and securing in large measure what they seek."

Life had never hammered Mr. Norton till it forced him to be himself. Some kindred of his, "seeking material comfort in a brutal way, and securing in large measure what they sought," and so recently that their accumulations were not yet dispersed, afforded him practical independence. He was his own Mæcnas, and products of that state "the beau of Boston town," Thomas Bailey Aldrich, told from experience;

"I swear I will get me a garret again,
And adore, like a Parsee, the sunset's fires,
And lure the Goddess, by vigil and pain,
Up with the sparrows among the spires.

“For a man should live in a garret aloof,
Have few friends, and go poorly clad,
With an old hat stopping the chink in the roof,
To keep the Goddess constant and glad.”

Mr. Norton's pulse seemed never to throb with the pulses of American men and women who guided and built the world about him. One doubts if he ever planted a sapling elm, or slipped down a lily-bulb, or planned a wren's house—doubts that in heart he had ever of a morning stridden a horse and gone with farm men to plough, sow, drive a reaper, or thresh umber kernels from their bearded husks; that he had ever, not by hands but in sympathy, mustered with longshoremen and hooked and heaved bales and boxes; or with cabbies had weathered bitter winters. His work was of his spacious study—sedulous, but untautened, with no opposition to brace the moral nerve, remote from the daily human laborer and service to “earth's paramount creature,” man. Warmth of sympathy with those having ends unlike his own did not override this retirement.

Perhaps it was because his environment fostered unsocial opinions that he lacked grasp, power of vivid, personal expression. Literature rarely chooses for her outpouring a medium who coddles exclusive interests. The eyes and soul of

the one who writes vital literature must be open to—must see and believe in and feel with—the gross of humanity. He can not be of a leisure class, cut off from association with the working life of the community. He can learn neither from books nor dabbings and driftings. Personal experience alone can bring him adequate knowledge. Words are his tools. He must know, or have known, people who use tools; he must have felt their sincerity in, and love for, tool-use. He must have learned that a laboring man uses words with a simplicity, an inerrant directness and effectiveness that one, unused to labor, educated exclusively on books and talk, does not possess. Truth and sincerity he must in some way have gained from tool users. These he must have if he would tool literature.

Mr. Norton's fellow-feeling, his fancy—using the word in its larger sense—seemed always furred. Genial as was his manner, illuminating and benedictive his smile, his face, his eyes, and whatever he wrote wanted the flash, the expansive take-off, the up-flight that comes to the imaginative soul who shares the pain and struggle of his fellows. Perhaps his frequent references to "the spirit of imagination" had its source in his consciousness of his own lack of the gift.

What he termed American lack of feeling for

beauty he often dwelt upon—without positing foremost that standards of beauty are as various as needs of beauty. At one of his lectures, students told, he set forward a chair, and pointing to it railed for the hour at a “civilization,” or “semi-civilization,” that could produce a work so destitute of grace and harmony. Hearing the story you at once question how Mr. Norton himself would make a chair—how did he make a chair?—what were its general lines?—what its detail? Idle queries. We find no record of his ever having made a chair, or of trying to make a chair. He had other fields of labor, it is true. His products in these fields are open to examination. Not one seems distinguished for beauty of construction, feeling, thought, when laid alongside the output of many workers in the same field. “Vigorous human-heartedness is the constituent principle of true taste,” says Wordsworth. And another witness comes to tell:—Once upon a time a very young man said to a Methodist that he saw nothing remarkable in the phrasing, the imagination and sweep of the Psalms. “Hm-m-m,” returned the pragmatic parson, “Write a few.”

Wholesome human interests of American villages I have outlined in “American Thumb-Prints,” and in “Workfellows in Social Progress-

sion." East and West American village communities were in general lines alike. When Easterners treked to, and settled under hickories and oaks, and along streams of the prairie-grassed West, they bore what their blood had wrought through centuries—forms and habits their forebears had developed in the old homes.

But back in the north-east border, during the nineteenth century, men multiplied. And brains, inherited from the pioneers, and ingenuity at devising makeshifts ripened into formal inventions of machinery. Great was the harvest. Machinery made money. And, as at other times in recorded history of colonists, a new growth sprang forward in town and village—centralization of social authority—caste.

The fish that used to swing in the Massachusetts State House had become not the sole beacon pointing the way to affluence. Gifts of Plutus, the blind old god of wealth, patron saint of this caste, waxed also from trade. When a merchant, or general store keeper, or a trader in rum, or an importer of, for instance, china-ware, Rio coffee, or Calcutta hides, or when a manufacturer of hair-oil, or a patent-medicine vender, or a marketer of dye-stuffs, or flavoring extracts, or spoons warranted to aid digestion, grew richer than his fellows; or when one factory workman, who had

clearer brains and forceful will, set up looms, or binders, and in market got higher prices than his fellow workers—when any one of these built a costlier house, sent about his family in finer clothes and finer equipage than his neighbor could afford—when (Carlyle speaks) God in disgust with the human threw him a bag of money—then befogged minds and inevitable ne'er-dowells increased in the community, and caste evolved.

Years went into decades, and these traders became a would-be aristocracy, faineant lords and ladies, returning to the social order crippling service for their elevation.

Opposing the spirit of the institutions of their country, through the power of money warring with justice, a cohesive plutocracy set one man above another. In blood, in race-tradition the rich were as the poor. It was no military conquest of another invading race. But the exploiters, blind to life—these soi-distant rajahs and begums—carried a pretense of conquest, of superiority, and that pretense bore a silent, repressive, coercive power and forced forward artificial standards, estimates of a formalized society and ideals foreign to the simple, old American life. They robbed the "poor relations" of their birthright. The female half, clannish from their cooped-up

life, narrow possibly from an innate snobbery, apt at it, demanded subservience and plastered on offensive oleaginous patronage. A chasm was created—one almost as broad as the gulf between the masses and gentry of the Anglo-Saxons of England.

From such conditions evolved what used to be known as "Boston brahmins." The phrase may have been cradled in the facetiousness of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes. The implication of *brahmin* is *pariah*, and scores of intermediate castes. On the horizon loomed a law of the Hindus which affirms that whoever may strike a brahmin with a blade of grass shall become an inferior quadruped through twenty-one migrations.

New aristocrats are notoriously self-assertive. "Harsh wholly is he who is new at his lordship," told Hephaestus while he was at work chaining Prometheus, the Giver, to the peak of the Caucasus. Not till the third generation, said the old English definition, does he milden into "gentleman." Affirmative testimony is in Mrs. Abigail Adams, herself telling that she made her own soap at Braintree, and chopped the wood with which she kindled her fires; and an outstanding brahminic figure, her dulcet descendant writing "The Education of Henry Adams; an Autobiography."

"Boston brahmins," like many other humans, judged according to their prejudices.

Mr. Norton's life fell within this period of caste-consciousness. On what a gentleman really was he may have spent much thought. Petty distinctions were often in his world. And we have seen, in his estimate of "nature" in America, how a narrow knowledge of "nature" he had seen in America overbore any imaginative sense of what nature in America must be at large. Possibly to his thinking there was no other estimate, save his own, of the microcosm he saw, and the macrocosm he never saw and never knew. The many about him were another people, of whom he had little understanding. What he would have done had he been one of the many, he may never have imagined. Imagination must have its origin in a subconscious sense of universality, justice.

"There was nothing to stimulate or develop the perceptions," wrote William Morris Hunt, "uttering odious truth," "and everything to suppress instinct and enthusiasm." "Cambridge was like Kaulbach's pictures. . . . One learned neither to see nor to feel. Everything was a *task*, a parrot's training."

"It was all literature," further wrote Hunt. In another way a luciferous lady told the same story when she confessed that all authors now

palled upon her save Shakespeare. In Shakespeare, she declared, she still delighted. Shakespeare she still read with avidity. "And," exclaimed the dame, lapsing into musing memories, "of all his plays, the one I like best is "She Stoops to Conquer."

"I am reading Greek this afternoon, Ellen," called the wife of a President of Harvard in one of these Victorian days, when a maid took up cards of two callers, "and I see no one."

"I never could understand the Trinity," explicated a brahmin who had lived to mature years a Unitarian, "I never could understand until I heard Dr. ——'s sermon on the three forms of water. Then I understood, and joyfully accepted the doctrine."

"These Westerners come here and think they can get into Cambridge society!", cried one born to the brahmin purple, forgetful of brotherhood of his Nazarene master, not knowing that taboo carries on cowardice of the dawn men. Then, unconscious of laughter bystanders suppressed through pity, the trumpet note, "But they can not."

And this brings to mind a scene of years much later, so late as September, 1919, when a Boston north-easter filled the sky with heavy, low-flying clouds, and a silver mist, beading each twig of

shrub and tree and enchanting the landscape by giving new proportions, resolved into a down-pour. It was the hour of the convening of the Thirteenth National Council of the United Chapters of Phi Beta Kappa at Harvard University.

Folding together my dripping raincoat and umbrella, I met a Cantabrigian member of the committee of arrangements as I entered the hall—a man at one time instructor in English at Harvard, best known to the world, however, by his later work in history and biography.

“Good morning, Mr. —, will you kindly tell me where I find a cloakroom?”

“There isn’t any cloakroom. Better put your coat where you can keep an eye on it.”

“Mr. —! At a Council of Phi Beta Kappa!”

“Hm-m-m,” he chortled, “I telephoned Miss Alice Longfellow this morning that before the delegates got to Craigie House this afternoon, she had better put away any little valuables standing about.”

“Of delegates to a Council of Phi Beta Kappa!” again I protested.

A receding “Hm-m-m.”

Unctuous social gnats are everywhere. “A man’s a man for a’ that” sweetened little of Cambridge atmosphere. Pretense and airs of superior-

ity to the rest of the country at times made it ridiculous. However, ladies and gentlemen were there, too, according to most difficult definitions of gentlemen and ladies. And great learning.

Ability, also. For witness to reaction from Hunt's "everything to suppress instinct and enthusiasm," the recreative criticisms of Professor——. A fragment of one of the lectures, taken in shorthand, I gave out in "Life at Laurel Town"; and requote it here. You will see the delivery accurately, if you fancy the lecturer sitting on a low table, one knee curving over its corner, his right hand swinging a slender steel chain which described a circle at its end with a bunch of keys, and winding the chain over forefinger, first to right and then to the left:—

"Personally I do not like Spenser, and Milton is to me excessively unpleasant. Milton is trying to be a Puritan and an artist at the same time, and the two things do not, and can not, coincide—a conscious moral purpose minus any effort for artistic effect.

"To my thinking 'Comus' isn't in it with 'The Faithful Shepherdess.' A fellow like Milton that has bored me with 'Paradise Lost,' and 'Samson Agonistes,' I have absolutely no use for. When I read Milton, as I have to, I read him for study, not for enjoyment. I feel that Milton is rhetoric,

just as Spenser is rhetoric. Take 'L'Allegro,' 'Comus,' etc.; these are rhetoric, jolly good rhetoric some parts of them. I should guess that 'Lycidas,' and some few of Milton's sonnets, were some of the most spontaneous things he ever did. He certainly wasn't spontaneous in 'Samson Agonistes,' although he spoke out with a certain resonant bang. No one can be spontaneous who constructs a Greek tragedy on the plan of a Hebrew story."

Rule of the brahmin ran through years. To permit it protracted life the people at large had too great sanity, too large social vision. But this "Boston brahmin"—like other pharisees in the moral world, like other biological sports in the physical world—was so terribly pleased with his pretentiousness that time was at some pains before cutting it down.

"That special massive brow built only in Boston," wrote one of our English cousins, "the lifeless eyes, the solemnity." The brahmin "had early in life swallowed himself, and so as often happens in such cases, he found himself compelled to dedicate the rest of his existence, not only to the task of digesting what he had swallowed, but to hiding from the outer world the ceaseless dyspepsia with which he had endowed himself by his autophagism."

During his eupeptic power—that is, as his cultural conditions were increasing—with the spiritual intensiveness of the Yankee, he flouted freshness and strangled passion, “unutterably shocked with Nature for making us of flesh at all,” if we may quote Roden Noel, and held “that the only way to remedy her immodest mistake was to hush the fact up altogether.” He must rebuke the grossness of common people. Life must measure, especially to those creatures he was apt to term “females,” faculties and physical appetites by anæmic and valetudinarian Victorian standards, be without carnality, gush with pure intellect only. “There was . . . everything to suppress instinct and enthusiasm. . . . One learned neither to see nor to feel.”

Estimates of the patent-medicine vender finally becoming moribund, his theatrical trappings time-worn, reappraisement came. And, in witnessing to their sense of justice and wholesome humor, a good, old-fashioned remnant of the brahmin’s descendants is this day a trifle ashamed of him and pretentious farce. Time is calculable when he shall have a shelf all to himself among museum-sorted fossils.

From the caste state of mind brahmins suffered as well as pariahs. I think Mr. Norton realized the prevalence and potency of caste in

his neighborhood, and at times tried to save himself from the bathos of it. He never did. Environment, and influences of those three years he declared the most important in life, proved too powerful. Floating microbes of "the sour mind of Europe" had entered his brain, and decades of American life did not prove phagocytic. Caste inhered in his estimates. That his writings testify unflinching.

"Gentleman" seems to have obsessed Mr. Norton, to have stood before him, or clung to his shoulders, like Sinbad's Old Man of the Sea, all his mature life. In a letter written in England, in 1857, he tells; "We had a pleasant little party there [with Clough] at dinner, with nobody of much consequence, but after dinner two or three people came in . . . Mr. Coventry Patmore . . . He has the look and bearing of a gentleman, and talks easily and pleasantly."

And so often through the years—even in the intensity and horrors of 1861, he told that a regiment was "officered throughout by gentlemen"—till the year he died, when he wrote; "A gentleman is the result of high breeding. . . . I believe that as time goes on and the democracy reaches its full development, there may be just as complete gentlemen in the sense of highbred men, as in any aristocracy with its long tradition. But

a gentleman is not an immediate product of a new country, nor of a society starting out on new principles like ours."

It would be easy to set out the errancy of the last two sentences—starting with Thucydides' report of Pericles' great speech. If such ideas as Mr. Norton expresses in his "Letters"—for instance, his "nobody of much consequence"—control our people, we never shall have real gentlemen. Only by estimating EVERYBODY of consequence shall we rise above the horrific states Mr. Norton bewails. When everybody is "OF CONSEQUENCE," no matter who or what he is, then we may have gentlemen. Those times arriving, those estimates prevailing will prove that although he in his circumscribed vision and illiberal measure believed them such, Mr. Norton's ideas were not those of a gentleman. Accent on superiority must, in that future, universally be adjudged under-bred. The French critic who avers that class distinctions are at bottom fruits of culture spoke but for dilettanti in the general relations of life where personal vanity and weakness, love of rank and hierarchies refer back to feudalism and monarchism. The assertion can not hold for an American. The completest aristocrat is everywhere the completest democrat.

One were almost inclined to think that Mr.

Norton had taken for his own peculiar expansion a pair of sentences from Burke's "Reflection on the Revolution in France," so similarly do they limn subjects to which he constantly reverts. But Burke's are broader and infinitely more polished; "There ought to be a system of manners in every nation which a well-informed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely."

We see the hauntingly "provincial" character of Mr. Norton's thought in what he wrote Ruskin about "nature's" lack of "poetic imagination in the construction of America." To his despondency about his own country his "Letters" bear further testimony: "We are still colonists and provincials in culture." "If the world were not so bad, and if America in especial were better." "I am American only so far as our political and social systems are . . . in accordance with the principles of utilitarianism." America, in 1873, eight years after the end of a protracted civil war, "is still the land of material prosperity, and of the light-mindedness that results from uninterrupted success. . . . No serious man who knows anything of human nature and of history, can cherish the optimistic fatalism that is characteristic of the American temper." Sometimes it was the men of later years in America—"the politicians of the

passing day," "the smug modern visages of the men" "at the 200th anniversary of Yale University," where, in 1901, Mr. Norton went to receive from Yale the gift of a degree.

And not only America, the times through many letters were out of joint; "this destructive and unpleasant century of ours." "One who can not share in that confident spirit of cheerful optimistic fatalism of which Emerson is the voice and prophet. Longfellow was complaining the other day of the decline in the interest in literature and in the taste for it. Nor was he mistaken—this generation is given over to the making and spending of money, and is losing the capacity of thought. It wants to be amused, and the magazines amuse it."

Characteristic of Mr. Norton's conceptions and conclusions are also his estimates of a few of his chosen people. In a letter to Mrs. Alexander Carlyle, referring to the death, in 1892, of George William Curtis, after speaking of Mr. Curtis' intimacy with his own family, Mr. Norton wrote; "He is, too, an irreparable loss to the country. He and Mr. Lowell are the two men who in their time have done the most for the civilization of America."

This last sentence you read in amazement. The broad fact of inheritance rises before you and

calls to your mind a sentence in the "Letters" about the narrow field of vision of Andrews Norton; "His mind was more remarkable for the clearness and distinctness with which he saw what was within the field of his vision than for the largeness of that field." Your amazement does not yield, however, but prompts you to rereading. Then you lay down the book and review the work of the two men, Mr. Curtis and Mr. Lowell, and influences working "the most for the civilization" of this country between the years of Mr. Lowell's birth, 1819, and the death of Mr. Curtis. Just what guided Mr. Norton's judgment in this writing? What was his weighing machine? What his measuring stick? His system of mensuration you would like to know. The irrationality of his estimate, and the excesses of it, the sophistry of it, strengthen your doubt as to the validity of other of his judgments. His laudations testify to a near-sightedness in viewing spiritual conditions of his country akin to the myopia, to which we referred, of his opinion, twenty years before, of "Nature in the construction of America." At heart, it would seem, he had no real, prescient understanding of the people and eventful evolution of a country where generations of his forbears had been citizens, and where he himself had lived some sixty years.

His admiration for Mr. Curtis was very genuine. When the two men were together Mr. Norton's attitude was one of deference, of veneration, of a squire to his knight. Admiration he expressed not only for Mr. Curtis' essays and stories, but for those editorial writings of Curtis which aimed to shape public opinion in reform of civil service after the Grant Administration. His reference in his "Letters," and in his article in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," speak of Curtis in kindling sentences—a manner rare in Mr. Norton's writing—sentences which warm and lift their subject in the ascent; "whose face and figure corresponded with the traits and stature of his soul. The grace and charm of his manner were the expression of his nature."

Mr. Norton's estimates of James Russell Lowell, the other of "the two men who in their time have done the most for the civilization of America," again present strange critical values; "Here are you depressed because your work is not as good as your ideal—and yet this . . . is the law of all best work. . . . Such incomparable gifts and powers as yours are constantly suggesting to you . . . that your work is never a just measure of them. . . . Something of what you have done will survive along with the precious rest of the final load of Omar's single camel."

"Lowell seems to crumble away, no matter what part of his work comes up for analysis," writes one critic to-day. Another avers; "'The Biglow Papers' is dead wood."

In a letter of November, 1891, to Mr. J. B. Harrison, whom by the way Mr. Norton once wrote of to one of his own caste with those nuances, those word-shadings, that "Boston brahmins" occasionally used when speaking with their ownest own—the attitude Wordsworth meant when he spoke of "insinuated scoff"

"And all that silent language which so oft,
In conversation between man and man"

blots the human countenance—to Mr. J. B. Harrison whom Mr. Norton described as "the most complete and genuine product of American institutions that I have ever known," "a Western man by birth, of poorest stock, a Methodist by inheritance, and with traits that remind me of Lincoln"—to this pariah-aggregate Mr. Norton wrote, "Mr. Lowell's loss to the nation is, I believe, the heaviest loss that could have fallen to it. He has done more than any man of our generation to maintain the level of good sense and right feeling in public affairs."

Again we wonder what guided Mr. Norton's

estimates—what was his yard stick! what his weighing machine! We wonder how Mr. Lowell exerted this vast influence in public affairs. When did he exert it? Where? In his early years he became broadly known through his poems. He edited magazines. He delivered various addresses bearing on politics. One, in 1866, "The President on the Stump," began, "Mr. Johnson is the first of our Presidents who has descended to the stump, and spoken to the people as if they were a mob."

In 1876, Mr. Lowell became an elector in the State of Massachusetts. History speaks of his conviction that Samuel J. Tilden had been elected President of the United States, and that, as an elector, he had the right to vote for Tilden. But Lowell, announcing that he further believed an elector bound to vote for the candidates of his party, and maintaining a "level of good sense in public affairs"—this was some twelve years before he delivered another public address, "The Place of the Independent in Politics"—Mr. Lowell voted for Mr. Hayes. President Hayes gave him the mission to Spain. Transferred later to England, where lack of a well-filled purse kept him from the munificent hospitality a diplomat commonly dispenses, he gained social distinction by fulfilling his duties, spontaneously expressing his exuberant nature, and delivering addresses,

one on "Democracy"—a subject upon which men, since the days Harmodius and Aristogeiton sheathed their swords in myrtle boughs, have spoken, *ore rotundo*, down through the centuries to the last speaker at the last public dinner last night. The Democracy volume, in Mr. Norton's opinion, "seems likely to reach the Fortunate Islands of posterity."

Mr. Norton was a more genuine American than he chose to appear. His sentimentality proves this. Sentimentalism, shut in, prompted him to the sophistical, parochial judgments we have just quoted. Sentimentalism led him in part to write those hundreds of letters to scores of people, which show him one of the most sentimental of men, and to declaring that he never lost a friend. Doubtless he would disclaim the description "sentimental." His words would probably be "sympathetic," "tender," and the adjective in which he seemed to delight, "sweet," "sweeter," "sweetest." He would surely put in a disclaimer, if you were to add that his sentimentalism proved the Americanism of his blood and early life. His sentimentalism merely ran over narrower lines than the sentimentalism of most Americans.

The first chapter of his "Letters" opens with these words; "The inheritance of Charles Eliot Norton from his New England ancestors is singu-

larly clear. Descended on his father's side from a race of preachers—the recognized aristocracy of early Massachusetts, the leaders of their communities." Here our quotation ends. Its last two phrases call to mind another used back in Athens, a number of years ago, the standing phrase by which Alcibiades and his leaguers described themselves, τοὺς Βελτίστους, The Best Men. Humbuggery for humbuggery, we prefer the Greeks.

The "Letters" exemplify what Mr. Norton termed "the fine art of letter-writing." "Letters in the true sense," he wrote, "are the offspring of leisure." Calm, smooth, using the diction of an editor and a leader-writer of, say, *The Nation* of the nineteenth century, they refer to his reading, his coterie, visits, talks—"provincial prattle" in which he delighted even as an old-fashioned dialoguist; like the dialoguist running at times the risk of affording very thin entertainment—and they point to his "pleasant and harmless occupation" of book tasks. They are in fact as familiar letters were among gentle folk of that day. They have no massive tragedy. There is not a hint for conjecture that a simple, normal soul contended with abnormal fates, nor do we find a heroic soul struggling with belittling, unconquerable adversities. They have no atmosphere of comedy unless it be that inherent in Frog-Pondian

brahminism, and the egotism it developed; or in sentences like this; Abraham Lincoln's "message on Emancipation is a most important step; but could anything be more feebly put, or more inefficiently written? His style is worse than ever; and though a bad style is not always a mark of bad thought—it is at least a proof that thought is not as clear as it ought to be."

Sometimes, and often in depressed phrase, the "Letters" touch on current topics, as we have just shown, in their impress revealing the patina of the brahmin and lack of faith of their writer. Most often they set out English standards of the Victorian period—ideals of a leisure class, especially housed men and women, who, from inertia, ennui, or lax moral nerves became too dulled courageously to look facts in the face. To one endeavoring to plumb their deepest thought, the "Letters" seem to measure the emotional and intellectual state of those class-conscious humans who found their interpretation of life and life's realities in "The Princess"; and, sitting on velvet lawns through soft summer afternoons and reading aloud and swallowing without rumination its subtle message, taking meanwhile their tea and hot, sliced and buttered crumpets, considered the caricature not only a poem of distinguished proportions, but comprehending social ideas more

pleasantly put and easier to understand than either a sociological syllabus or an economics brochure.

Within the "Letters" stands little new, little original in the writer himself—no profundity of feeling, no penetration of thought, no mental alertness, no high spirits, no winged word, no pungent phrase, no wit of the man, no rich, spontaneous personality, nothing dynamic. They are neat, "sweet," dapper, at times almost smug and dilettante, erudite, dogmatic, inhibitory, static, from their caste-consciousness insensitive to, and misunderstanding of, conditions outside their writer's "parish."

Not carrying personal experiences of depth and breadth, they are myopic in viewing our people and affairs—earnest, however, so far as lay within the power of vision of their inditer. He tells us that he loved his country, worked for his country, wept for his country. Coming upon such passages you wonder how, when a man of letters of the eminence of Ruskin referred to Mr. Norton's native land and people in grossly insulting phrases—you wonder why Mr. Norton, in his love for his country and work for his country, made public no protest—not even the protest of misunderstanding. Along with fulsome flattery of Mr. Norton himself in black and white is set

out Ruskin's declaration that he had "no taint of American ways"—"he is hopelessly out of gear and place, over in the States there, as a runaway star dropped into Purgatory . . . only about the thirtieth or fortieth part of Charles Norton's effective contents and capacity are beneficially spent in the dilution of the hot lava, and fructification of the hot ashes, of American character."

Ruskin's estimate of American character is of small consequence now. But some forty years ago criticasters re-echoed his absurdities throughout the English-speaking world—and beyond the English-speaking world. Too ultra-sophisticated, Mr. Ruskin and Mr. Norton, to remember that the "Purgatory" of "the States," like the rest of earth, is

"crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes—
The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries,
And daub their natural faces."

After the *littérateur* died Mr. Norton had his innings, and he told how Ruskin was "one of the most gifted and sweetest natures the world ever knew. He was a kind of angel gone astray; meant for the thirteenth century, he got delayed on the

way, and when he finally arrived was a white-winged anachronism."

All this hyperbole the sole way of getting comprehension of, in the bright light of the sun and our own meagre, undiluted American *Weltanschauung*, is to say it over at least once more to ourselves. Time and space it involves—of which we, through the many infinite mercies extended to us humans, have certain apperceptions. Let us begin with the intimation of space:—*Ecce stellam!* a star—a star with no taint of American ways—seemingly forgetting that every one of the heavenly bodies runneth an appointed course, jumped the track—*Vae stellae!*—and dropped—*O stellam infelicem!*—into the Purgatory of these United States. *O Fortunatum Purgatorium!* Hopelessly out of gear and place in this Purgatory, the United States, a friend declared the deserter, even to the loss, which the friend arithmetically calculated, of twenty-nine-thirtieths, or thirty-nine-fortieths, of the runaway's effective contents and capacity—*Eheu! Eheu!*—only about one-thirtieth or one-fortieth of the star's effective contents and capacity—*O exsulem!*—being beneficially spent in the dilution of the hot lava, and fructification of the hot ashes of American character. *O Χαρακτήρ Americanorum! O hot lava! O la-di-da!*

"Fructification of hot ashes" would seem merely a recessive, dawn-mind pretense of knowledge of thermal and igneous soils. Scientists nowadays tell us that runaway stars make more ashes than they fructify. But when stellar existences get loose in the pen of a rhetorician, or in this "Purgatory" of "the States," facts may differ. All we can do is to keep a modest silence and thank God for the little Purgatory. Here endeth the hokum of the star. None but bumptious ignorance would insert so audacious and counterfeiting a detail in the vast and noble landscape of American life.

"The retort courteous" brings to our observation the other of the heavenly bodies, the anachronistic angel. In the tick-tock of eternity Mr. Ruskin, we are told, was a kind of angel gone astray, a white-winged anachronism. Meant for the thirteenth century, according to some audition seemingly tuned in with celestial broadcasting, he went loafing along on his way to this terrestrial ball, and finally, six hundred years after the date to which it is averred he had been assigned, he landed in London in our spheroid's diurnal revolution known as the eighth of February, 1819, in the house of a Scotsman and his spouse, the one "an entirely honest merchant" who had got

rich by importing Spanish wines for British stomachs.

Any clear American eye sees this interchange of compliments is, *horresco referens*, bam—*nugae*, as the old Romans said; *λῆροι λεπτότατοι καὶ φλυαρίαι*, the honest-spoken old Greeks would declare.

On quite another occasion Mr. Norton wrote, "Democracy does not tend to produce courage." His reaction to Ruskin's lollipop would support the dictum. Intelligence, or whatever of mentality went into Ruskin's inflammatory fantasy, was of calibre kindred to the humor of his translation of a letter-head, "Conway, N. H." into "Conway, New Hell."

The "Letters" are a record for familiars of Mr. Norton, acquaintances who love a long list of names of Mid-Victorian poets, philosophers, essayists, novelists, painters, critics at that time before the public eye. They swarm through the story till you long for the voice and unconsciousness of at least one common—*id est*, unadvertised—man.

On life as we know it in these years, and on that sad state the writer called the "semi-civilization" of our people, the "Letters" have little more bearing than the dinosaur eggs, found

in fossil heaps in Mongolia, have on the egg market of to-day. The content which makes for longevity, or, in Carlyle's phrase, "a thing that has the temper of eternity in it," is not theirs.

Thomas Gray, in one of his letters, says he suffers not *melancholy*, but *leucocholy*. That Mr. Norton's "Letters" suffer. They express a white choler. In the second volume they become plangent letters, still provincial-minded letters without range of vision, still without the piquancy of a fair and free-spirited survey. Barren, often calfish lamentations stimulate in no wise to construction—not even to constructive criticism. "The world is raging after its own wild way, but though it makes me very sorry for its folly, it does me no other harm." The outputting spirit that builds—that built the house he lived in, his town, his university—is not in the "Letters." Their main value is, we repeat, to make apparent interests of a "gentleman," Puritan-blooded, studious, dilettante, of a "very cheerful despondency," who, at Cambridge, Massachusetts, during the latter half of the nineteenth century especially, loved to light up altars to men who had become eminent while they were in the flesh, and to show what sort of a soul this gentlemanhood developed—a professorship of Fine Arts at Harvard aiding and abetting the evolution. Now and then

the "Letters," at their core, suggest that they might have been written with an eye to future publication.

Regard for a theatrical, a spectacular quality, one would hardly expect to find in a provincially minded offspring of Puritans—the social pose to which we have referred, the reiterated "gentleman," "gentlemen"—was doubtless allied to Mr. Norton's sentimentality. "The true gentleman is as rare as the true genius," he wrote in 1896, "and democracy in its present stage is not favorable to the existence of either. There are many excellent and worthy men, but very few who care for, or are capable of practising, the social art, that finest of the dramatic arts, in which the individual nature expresses itself in modes of ideal pleasantness and refinement."

Such a delivery as this seems possible only to a man in extreme reaction against the grasp on everyday realities of his Puritan antecedents,—a man who has swung to faith in an "aristocracy with its long tradition" that never existed except in some dreamer's Utopian empire. Every man an actor? The social art a dramatic art? That a man should in the actualities of life be posing and posturing? A horrible conception.

"The social art, that finest of the dramatic arts, in which the individual nature expresses it-

self in modes of ideal pleasantness and refinement" is notoriously best portrayed in four hundred letters of an English nobleman of the eighteenth century. Could Mr. Norton have wished youth and age to follow Chesterfield's advices to adolescent Philip Stanhope? In baroque "modes of ideal pleasantness and refinement" set his intimates, Ruskin, a wine trader's son, unceasingly driving pen and pencil, or Carlyle laboring as heavily as a German professor and at all times maintaining a rugged rusticity. Would rococo frames beseem Carlyle's volcanic smoke and hurtling stones, or Ruskin's age of innocence and limpid rhetoric?

Mr. Norton's "social art that finest of the dramatic arts" Montaigne, teaching with vastly greater grasp, had already applied; "Who has anything of value in him, let him make it appear in his manner, in his ordinary discourses, in his courtships and quarrels, in play, in bed, at table, in the management of his affairs . . . Good God! Madam, how I should hate the reputation of being a pretty fellow at writing, and an ass and a sot in everything else."

Upon one failure to attitudinize Mr. Norton animadverted. Writing of Lowell, he said; "We have had no man of such a large stock of native gifts as he; but the soil of this 'uncouth corner of

the world,' as Governor Belcher called it some hundred and fifty years ago, was not favorable for the free and full growth of his powers . . . It would have been well for him if he could have gone abroad earlier, and come into fuller relations with the great world. I think he never was completely at ease in the society of that world—never completely at ease even in that little fraction of the society we have here; and although his brilliant gifts made him a delightful guest, yet his want of ease sometimes resulted in a lack of amenity and in a display of the brilliant rather than the genial side of his nature."

Poor Mr. Lowell!—"an instrument through which the god breathed." It would seem that they pestered him, wanting his superabundant nature to show off. And the nature got a little irritated, and did. *Hinc illae lacrimae. Risum teneatis.*

Mr. Norton's dictum about "the social art, that finest of the dramatic arts," recalls how English critics have, in various writings, through many decades, told that Americans lack in simplicity, sincerity. Mr. Norton's "social art, that finest of the dramatic arts" is exactly what the English say they detest. "All Americans seem queer and somewhat uncouth to us, no matter whether they

be millionaires or itinerant venders of 'fish,' 'gum-drops,' and 'peanuts,' " writes an Englishman, remotely echoing Ruskin's bombast about "American ways," and "the hot lava" and "hot ashes of American character." "Their manners may be outwardly polished," the Englishman goes on, "but there is an artificiality and a pretense (even if it be the pretense of modesty) which is altogether opposed to all our European ideas of refinement." At Mr. Norton's deposition about "the social art, that finest of the dramatic arts" the English critic was, perchance, taking his fling.

Towards the end of this year 1926, a distinguished English soldier has published his own definition of a gentleman; "Two generations passed through our public schools, which are not centres of learning, but courts of honor, we consider the minimum time wherein to produce a gentleman, and to the English a gentleman is a man who can be trusted, who cannot be bribed, who does not cheat at cards, who does not drop his *h's*, who goes to church in a top hat, and who considers cricket the king of games. If he is intensely stupid, so much the better, for then these aristocratical distinctions will appeal to him in greater force."

This small book you are reading is standing witness that Mr. Norton's putting in practice his theory of "the finest of the dramatic arts" cried

havoc in at least one plain and simple business affair.

He was a punctilious observer of the small courtesies of life. To this his letters in the earlier pages of this book testify. Also his welcomes to Shady Hill—their seeming sincerity expressed in warmth and grace of bearing, an agreeable voice and apparent absence of “dramatic art”—showed that he loved what Carlyle says “is dearest to all men, the society and light of one another.” He dignified his daily associations with simple kindness, we repeat. Simple kindness was in his nature. But his real *politesse de coeur* wandered far from his native soil, and at home was fettered by the caste feeling to which he refers in writing Leslie Stephen, in 1892—an “ever increasing dislike to my fellow country men.” Earlier letters bear intimations of “dislike to fellow country men.” “No compatriots intrude on this sacred solitude” [Siena]. “If I ever come back, may I be born Italian.” And from Dresden; “Americans, many of whom are a sort whom one does not see at home, and does not wish to see abroad.”

Reflecting on such deliveries, by the bye, one questions whether an ingratiating manner and a sedate, unbending dogmatism in Mr. Norton—his attitude towards Ruskin was such that once, at least, Ruskin called the younger man “Papa”

—one questions whether the dogmatism of Mr. Norton, and his antipathy to Americans, outspoken through years, may not have conveyed to the ingenuous, impressionable sensibility of Ruskin the feeling of his friend's exclusive superiority among Americans and led him to invent his extravaganza of the runaway star.

Mr. Norton's "ever increasing dislike" may express him incompletely. In us tellurians, savage and civilized alike, a sentiment has stirred thousands of generations of human hearts—reverence for and homage towards a land and its genius sanctified by works of men and women who make especial appeal to our sympathy; lands holy by reason of their production and nurture of souls, long since departed, whose life-works prove them heroic in stature, or of others whose names myths of the people associate with human service. The feeling most familiar among us is that which, from the days of Jerome and Paula, has drawn pilgrims—monk and nun, clown and emperor, palmer and crusader whom worship in spirit and in truth did not satisfy—to the City of Peace of the old Jews and prostration before the Nativity at Bethlehem, the Sepulchre and the scene of the Pentecostal effusion. Mr. Norton's nostalgia may have reflected this sensibility—which is often-

est apparent in those without power of self-expression and probably without articulated promptings to endeavor to endow their own country with the beauty the self-abnegating souls they glorify accomplished abroad. For Italy and England, especially, Mr. Norton seems to have had such regard as Cicero says he felt towards Athens, and the good and wise who in Athens had greatly lived and labored.

In one of the "Letters," written about 1879, Mr. Norton tells Ruskin; "My life would doubtless be better in many ways in Europe; but I should be after all of less service there than here." And to another he unbosoms himself more completely; "Your letters make me feel sharply what I am losing in life—pleasures, opportunities, happiness, indeed, of a sort that nothing else can supply. I envy the man whose roots draw full nourishment from his native soil. I am half starved here—and in the old world I should be half starved for this strange new one. A thousand years hence, perhaps, America will be old enough for men to live in with comfort, and with complete satisfaction."

All very plangorous. And all lacking in intellectual depth. In the modern world no man's roots—not even a sodden-witted, appetiteful

Philistine's who grants nothing to the revelations and gifts of the classic spirit,—can “draw full nourishment from his native soil.”

Reading this lamentation one is reminded of the distinguished analysis of Wilhelm Scherer, one of the men whom Mr. Norton might have “en-
vied” because “his roots drew full nourishment from his native soil”; “Scholarship is apt to destroy plain common sense and clearness of vision. It propagates intellectual subtleties and its own artificial taste. It has poisoned entire literary epochs by its boastful assumption of superiority and its conceited exclusiveness. It creates false standards for men, and, employing the delusive name of culture, it estimates a quantity of some particular kind of information at a higher value than the old mysterious power of the heart.”

Mr. Norton lived in a century noted for diffusion of ideas of humanity, and yet a century whose virtuous soil was peculiarly fertile in producing hypocrites, snobs and poseurs. Great was Veneer, and multiform in that age were its prophets. Portrayers of those times, especially Thackeray and Dickens—and let us not forget Carlyle—left imperishable records of this fact.

Save towards his country and his own people, Mr. Norton's attitude reflected his humane cen-

tury. An intellectual. A forwarder of art and archaeology. But a doubter and decrier of his fellow country men, of their *mores* and institutions. Of ochlocracy he at times expressed detestation and as dejected a judgment as seventeenth-century Sir Thomas Browne, when he wrote; "If there be any among those common objects of hatred I do condemn and laugh at, it is . . . the multitude; that numerous piece of monstrosity, which, taken asunder, seem men, and reasonable creatures of God, but, confused together, make but one beast."

"In Europe," told Mr. Norton in 1883, after continuous residence in America of more than a decade, "I could not but feel with pain the ill wrought by the progress of democracy—the destruction of old shrines, the disregard of beauty, the decline in personal distinction, the falling off in manners."

An inhibitor in a generation of thou-shalt-nots! And with another rap at the cultural level of yokel and proletarian—the falling off in manners, the decline in personal distinction; "We absolute pessimists accept this as the best of all possible worlds. . . . You expect less of men when you look at them not as little lower than the angels, but as a little higher than the anthropoid apes."

Independent judgments in his "Letters" exhibit at times an inability to judge men, and occasionally seem astoundingly petty and weak. Until early in 1926, when I read the two volumes—the "Letters"—I supposed him a man of larger mould, of greater spiritual stature and clearer judgment of practical affairs in the year-after-year run of life than the contents of the nine-hundred pages measure him. Doubtless his editors' advisory and interlineal comments and his own writing portray him scrupulously. They make plain that he lacked the force of intellect that goes straight to the bed-rock of a subject, and never gives way to any but most solid argument.

His life fell, we were saying, in the period seeded by the French Revolution and its cry for social sympathy and social justice. He was of the reactionaries. He died at a ripe age, before democracy was to rise again, with renewed strength, in the World War.

A Victorian he met in England, a man of his own generation, whom Mr. Norton was pleased to speak of as a "gentleman"—this Englishman under the title "Magna Est Veritas" told;

"the lie shall rot;
The truth is great, and shall prevail,
When none cares whether it prevail or not."

This is an outstanding message—more outstanding than the sentence oftenest quoted from Mr. Norton; “None of you, probably, has ever seen a gentleman.”

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